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# AN ANALYSIS OF PERSPECTIVES ON NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR NEPAL

©

by

SHREERAM LAMICHHANE

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 1992

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# ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to develop a conceptual framework for nonformal adult education that has potential to help illiterate people, such as the adult population in Nepal, to improve their living conditions socially, economically, physically and culturally. More specifically, an attempt was made to conceptualize an integrated empowerment framework for an enhanced approach to nonformal adult education.

Ideas for the conceptual framework were generated through analytical/critical reviews of literature that discussed four different theoretical perspectives on nonformal adult education, through case studies of nonformal education in three different contexts and through a field survey that was conducted in Nepal. The four perspectives include the radical emancipatory, the liberal emancipatory, the human resource development and the rural development perspectives, respectively. For the three case studies, experiences with nonformal adult education in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua were reviewed. The field study in Nepal focused on soliciting perceptions on nonformal adult education from policy makers, individuals associated with program implementation, facilitators and participants.

Data collected from different sources and review of some relevant literature provided the basis for proposing a conceptual framework for the further development of nonformal adult education. Empowerment of the poor illiterate population of Nepal is the major focus of this conceptual framework. Nonformal adult education, as an empowering process, has potential to promote mental and manual skills and capabilities for making the future of poverty stricken people hopeful and humane.The meaning of empowerment, through nonformal adult education as discussed in this thesis, provides a sense of generating various abilities among the target groups for achieving improved quality of life. These abilities may be envisaged in terms of fostering critical perceptive power, recognizing one's own innate talents and self-worth, of acquiring socially and economically gainful skills, and of implementing the acquired skills by closing the gap which exists between people and services.

The importance of field testing the proposed framework necessitated giving attention to a planning process. Various aspects of planning such as needs assessment, objectives, structures, resources, personnel, training and evaluation were considered important for the implementation of the framework. Results of the study have implications for the further development of the concept of nonformal education and for research.

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

In many developing countries the structures of formal education -- public and private schools, technical and vocational colleges, higher education institutions -- have often been unable to respond adequately to the educational needs of adults. The problem with the education of adults begins at the primary level. Many children do not have access to a basic education because the necessary services and facilities are not available to them. Others who have access to schools may drop out for socio-economic reasons or because the programs lack relevance. As a consequence, a growing number of illiterate adults in economically poor countries continues to impede improvements in the quality of life and advances in economic development.

Both educators and policy makers have turned their attention to nonformal education as a means of addressing this problem. Nonformal education refers to a broad range of learning activities, conducted outside of the formal primary and secondary structure and curriculum, designed to promote literacy, personal health and well-being, and income generating skills. Various approaches to nonformal education have been proposed and attempted. The challenge for both educators and policy makers is to devise strategies which have a high potential for being effective in a specific context. The study which is the subject of this thesis was designed to address the challenge of enhancing approaches to nonformal education.

## Purpose and Problem

The purpose of the study was to develop a conceptual framework of nonformal education that had the potential of improving the quality of life of illiterate adults in Nepal. In general, the research approach involved analyzing critically current thought about, and actual practice of, nonformal education in order to devise a conceptual basis for the further development of such programs in the Nepalese context. For this purpose, various objectives were identified which prompted several research questions. The objectives and related research questions were as follows:

1. To define and explain the concept of nonformal education.
    - 1.1 What are the general features of nonformal education? How does it differ from formal education?
    - 1.2 What are the essential characteristics involved in structures and educational processes of nonformal education?
2. To examine critically selected theoretical perspectives on nonformal education.
    - 2.1 What are the major conceptual or theoretical perspectives on nonformal education?
    - 2.2 What are the characteristics of these perspectives in terms of their philosophical bases, assumptions/values, methodologies and outcomes?
    - 2.3 What environmental or contextual factors are compatible with each of the perspectives?
3. To describe and analyze specific examples or cases of nonformal education in developing countries which are fairly similar to Nepal in terms of problems of development.
    - 3.1 What types or forms of nonformal education have been attempted in selected countries?
    - 3.2 What means or strategies were used in implementing and delivering nonformal education?
    - 3.3 What were the outcomes or consequences of these initiatives?
    - 3.4 What implications might be drawn from these experiences for nonformal education in Nepal?
4. To review critically the nature of nonformal adult education in Nepal.
    - 4.1 How has nonformal education evolved in Nepal?
    - 4.2 What types of program activities have been implemented?

4.3 What factors account for the success or lack of success of various program activities?

4.4 What are the implications of these experiences for future policy decision?

5. To propose a conceptual basis for the further development of nonformal education in Nepal.

5.1 What are the development needs of Nepal which might be addressed through nonformal adult education?

5.2 What type of conceptual base for nonformal adult education is most likely to help illiterate adults to address their basic developmental needs and related problems?

5.3 What is the potential compatibility/incompatibility of each of the perspectives analyzed previously with the Nepalese context?

5.4 What might be a relevant conceptual and operational framework for nonformal education in Nepal?

6. To outline an approach to implementing the proposed framework of nonformal education.

6.1 What structures or agencies should be involved in planning implementation?

6.2 What planning process should be used?

6.3 What should be the scope of planning?

6.4 What should be the assessment process?

6.5 What should be the approach to addressing persistent issues and problems?

These objectives and research questions guided the development of the general design of the study as well as more specific approaches to data collection and analysis.

## Significance of the Problem

Two major problems -- access and relevance -- confront the structure of the formal system of education in developing countries. The primary level seems to be affected by these problems in particularly significant ways. Many school age children are either not attending school or have dropped out for various reasons. This has resulted in the rapid increase in the numbers of illiterate youths and adults in many countries. As Shakya (1985) pointed out, in Asia and the Pacific region alone, the dropout rate at the primary level was as high as 80 percent. Moreover, about 59 percent of the total population of children and youths between the ages of 6 and 23 years were not in school. According to Coombs (1985), the absolute number of the illiterates will continue to increase and, at the present rate, will reach more than 900 million by the year 2000. Undoubtedly, these data indicate the immensity of the future illiteracy problem.

Schools have been unable to accommodate all children of school age to reduce the dropout rate and to develop relevant curricula in relation to learning needs (Simmons, 1980; Coombs, Prosser & Ahmed, 1973). Rural schools, in particular, have difficulty coping with these challenges. The general conditions constitute a crisis situation in the formal system of education (Coombs, 1976). In order to deal with this crisis, Coombs (1976) has advocated a stronger educational initiative focused not only upon the cognitive development of the participants but also on helping them to satisfy such crucial needs as food, health and employment. With these objectives in mind, he proposed that nonformal education should be given as much or even higher priority than is given to formal education.

In the early 1970s a research report entitled *New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth* was published (Coombs, Prosser & Ahmed, 1973) in which the objectives, approaches to planning and practices of nonformal education were analyzed in relation to rural development issues and problems. Nonformal education also began to be studied from the socio-psychological and overall human resource development perspectives in addition to the rural development perspective. Each perspective is based upon a particular philosophy, assumptions and methodology; each has both strengths and shortcomings. Instead of focusing on the perspectives individually and in isolation, an integration of them might contribute to the development of an enhanced framework for nonformal education designed to address the needs of illiterate adults. The intent of such a framework would be to assist individuals to conduct nonformal education with due recognition of socio-psychological, rural development and human resource development needs simultaneously. More specifically, the outcome of this study is the development of a conceptual framework of nonformal education which has potential to be increasingly responsive to meeting the diverse development needs of people in rural areas.

The poverty situation in the Nepalese context may be attributed not only to the lack of material resources but also to the attitudinal, perceptual and intellectual inertness of the majority of people, mainly because of their educational deprivation. In order to energize these people both mentally and manually for the purpose of development, they must be provided with relevant learning opportunities. Considering various shortcomings of the existing nonformal education programs, specifically in terms of enabling illiterate adults to help themselves to improve their living conditions, designing a different conceptual framework may enhance the effectiveness of these programs. The objective is to produce a viable framework that will focus on helping illiterate adults to become more socially conscious, economically self-reliant, politically responsible and educationally aware.

Research in the field of nonformal education in Nepal has been concerned with making the programs more needs-responsive and development-oriented. In spite of these attempts, no significant outcomes have been achieved, mainly because the studies have been based on the prevailing limited perspective on nonformal education. As opposed to this trend, this study attempted to influence the research emphasis on nonformal education by focusing on the conceptual rather than the operational aspects.

## Conceptual Basis of the Study

The development of nonformal education has not been consistent over time. Nevertheless, in recent times its value has been recognized as a viable educational strategy for providing learning opportunities for disadvantaged and deprived people. An indication of the nature and importance of nonformal education as a learning strategy may be derived from considering its historical and philosophical perspective, and the evolution of the concept.

## Historical Perspective

Nonformal adult education has a lengthy history. In ancient times, formal educational structures did not exist; and therefore all learning took place in a nonformal manner. The older generations passed on knowledge to the next generation through oral communication. Occupational skills were transferred mainly through demonstration and practical learning experiences. Bacquelaine and Raymaekers (1987) pointed out that endogenous traditional education prevailed before schools became the dominant form of education. In addition, religious institutions such as mosques, churches, temples and monasteries also organized learning activities. Coombs (1985) stated that religious institutions, especially those of Christianity and Islam, played a key role in the expansion of basic learning opportunities. Participants in these institutions, in addition to becoming involved in learning activities, also extended their services to carry out duties assigned to them by the religious authorities. Although this tradition has lost its widespread dominance, it continues to be significant in some parts of the world.

Since ancient times, education has been considered as important as any other basic human need. Consequently, in the history of the human struggle, education has been one of the paramount concerns. In this context, education for adults is not an exception. As Selman (1987) pointed out, the history of education for adults has continued for about the last two centuries with diversity in purposes as determined by the requirement of fulfilling individual and social goals. Selman (1987) stated: "The story of adult education over the past two centuries is intimately linked with the struggle of humanity for freedom and dignity, for progress and development -- for the good life" (p. 3).

Although nonformal adult education is as old as the history of human beings, its growth and expansion in modern times started only in the 1950s and gained momentum in the 1960s. For example, while adult education in China started in earliest times and significant development occurred during the old democratic regime (1911-1919), consolidation and rapid expansion of nonformal adult education took place only after the founding of the people's republic (Zhongda, 1987). Popular adult education in Latin America dates back to the 1890s; however, it was only in the 1960s that adult education gained "theoretical and methodological" status (Gazardo, 1987). The tradition of nonformal education in India and Nepal has existed since ancient times. A major turning point occurred in the early 1970s when stronger institutional support was provided for such programs. Sri Lanka experienced meaningful development in nonformal adult education after the inception of the *Sarvodaya* or "mass-awakening" movement in 1958.

In the United States, the innovation of home study circles about a century ago provided learning opportunities to adults with little or no schooling (Knox, 1987). At about the same time, study circles were adopted in Sweden and made an important contribution to educating adults. Expansion of adult education in the United States occurred rapidly between the period following World War I and the beginning of World War II. The history of nonformal adult education in the Canadian context reveals that this form of education began at the end of the 19th century and helped thousands of people to gain knowledge and skills in agriculture (Michele, 1987). Regarding the history of the development of nonformal adult education in many industrialized countries, Rubension (1987) stated that although nonformal adult education in that context was in operation as early as the latter part of the nineteenth century, its significance as a major topic of public policy was recognized only in the late 1960s.

Unesco's initiative in the development and expansion of nonformal adult education cannot be overlooked. As Bacquelaine and Raymaekers (1987) noted:

> The World Congress of Ministers of Education on the eradication of illiteracy (Tehran, 1965) which drew attention to the need to educate adults, an area much neglected by institutionalized schools, and which crystallized in the launching in the late 1960s of a series of so-called 'functional literacy' program under the aegis of UNESCO, UNDP in collaboration with national governments. (p. 4)

## Evolution of the Concept

Although nonformal strategies of educating illiterate adults existed in the past, the concept of nonformal education has more recent origins. Adult education was the popular term that was used for some time. After the concept of "nonformal education" was introduced and elaborated (Coombs, Prosser & Ahmed, 1973) in the late 1960s, its popularity rapidly spread. Learning programs designed to educate not only illiterate adults but also other educationally deprived groups of people outside of the conventional system were defined as nonformal education. Since the emergence of this concept, various initiatives have been undertaken and numerous publications have been produced.

Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973) took the lead in developing the concept of nonformal education. Later Coombs and Ahmed (1974, 1975, 1980, 1982) co-authored a number of books and research reports focusing on nonformal education as a strategy for rural development. The analyses basically dealt with development problems in the Third World and with addressing these problems through a nonformal education strategy. In addition, Grandstaff (1978) and Simmons (1980) also examined the concept of nonformal education and its potential for development in the Third World. Authors writing in the field of nonformal education tend to use "adult education" and "nonformal education" interchangeably because in developing countries the primary purpose of each is to enhance general literacy, work-oriented literacy, income generating capabilities and develop other socio-economic and health related skills.

Authors like Harbison (1973), Myers (1967), and Parnes (1984) comment on the need for developing human resources as a foundation for total development. From their discussions, implications can be drawn for the design and operation of nonformal education programs. In contrast, advocates of a radical emancipatory philosophy of nonformal education, for instance, Freire (1970, 1973, 1975, 1985, 1987), Collins (1977), Conally (1981), Goulet (1975), and Smith (1976) view education as a force for achieving justice and emancipation from oppressive social practices. These theorists base their analysis on the radical paradigm and stress the need for action against the dominant system through educational processes which arouse people's critical level of awareness.

Another school of thought that is based on the emancipatory paradigm might be termed as the liberal emancipatory school. Authors such as Rogers (1983) and Knowles (1990) emphasize that learning should be humanistic and allow for self-actualization. In order for the process to be effective, a special relationship must be established between teachers and students. Specifically, teachers should recognize students as equally able and competent beings whose progress toward self-actualization can be facilitated by a humanistic teaching-learning process. These authors believe that developmental changes in society may not require a radical approach because people see themselves as capable of initiating the process of change. Ideas in each of these schools have potential for incorporation into a more comprehensive conceptual base for nonformal education.

## Philosophical Perspective

Generally, people living in a condition of social and economic deprivation are also deprived educationally; consequently, illiteracy and poverty exist as twin problems. Confronted by immense problems, poor illiterate people tend to be resigned to fate, and to develop individual inertness and fear of freedom. In addition, the systemic oppression solidifies these perceptions and tendencies. Consequently, people perceive themselves as helpless and dependent which in reality is a false consciousness (Fay, 1987). Predominance of false consciousness in the lives and reality of people living in poverty characterized by dysfunctional attitudes, values, beliefs and perceptions has generated a social crisis (Fay, 1987). On the other hand, oppressors have continued to disregard the need of the people by trying to maintain the status quo. They seem to be insensitive to the fact that their oppressive practices tend eventually to constrain their own lives. Such a state of affairs impedes the development of full humanity. Confronting this crisis requires relevant educational endeavors focused on breaking the "culture of silence" and "culture of submission" and directed toward a positive transformation through reflection and action (Fay, 1987). Such a critical philosophy of education has potential to help people become emancipated from their wretched state.

The study reported here was developed within a critical perspective on education. Essentially, the intent was to reflect on various theories of nonformal education and to conceptualize a framework for action aimed at alleviating the social crisis resulting from false consciousness. Although the current study was focused only on the reflective aspect, the action phase was not disregarded entirely. A participatory approach to program design and implementation is proposed. The researcher subscribes to the philosophy of participatory action research, even though the strategy was not suitable for this particular project.

## Nature of the Study

The research strategies required to achieve the purpose of the study included a comprehensive review of literature on nonformal education, an intensive analysis of documents about nonformal education in three specific contexts and a field study conducted in Nepal. Essentially, the research process progressed through a number of distinct phases. After a general review of relevant documents, attention shifted in turn to (a) an in-depth study of theoretical perspectives on nonformal education, (b) a critical analysis of different perspectives, (c) a critical review of case studies of nonformal education, (d) an analysis of data from Nepal, and (e) the development of a conceptual base for the further development of nonformal education in the Nepalese context.

## Review of Literature

Adult, nonformal and other relevant educational literature which dealt specifically with various perspectives on adult learning was identified and reviewed. In order to identify related books and other documents, searches were carried out on several data bases such as ERIC, UNESCO and those of other national and international organizations. *Dissertation Abstracts International* was consulted for the identification of relevant theses and dissertations. In general, an attempt was made to follow the suggestions of Merriam and Simpson (1984, p.138) for conducting a study that involves primarily document analysis. These steps include exploring literature in various forms such as books, monographs, anthologies, research reports, reviews, journals, dissertations and country reports; selecting the proper sources on the basis of frequently quoted authors, recent publications, and landmark literature; and integrating, synthesizing, and critiquing thoughts and research findings on the topic.

In keeping with these suggestions, various documents on the topic were consulted. Literature focusing on different perspectives on nonformal education and explaining nonformal education experiences in developing countries that is available in libraries served as the major source of data. Research reports, articles and policy papers published in various international and professional journals formed another source. Evaluative reports on nonformal education were reviewed in order to derive some conclusions for developing a conceptual framework relevant to Nepal.

Similarly, literature which explains nonformal education from various perspectives, such as the radical emancipatory perspective, the liberal emancipatory perspective, the rural development perspective and the human resource development perspective was critically analyzed. Specifically, an emphasis was placed on cross analyzing the philosophies, values, assumptions and methodologies of all perspectives.

A number of steps were followed in order to systematize and analyze the available data. Ideas acquired from the study of relevant materials were carefully recorded. A broad outline of the dissertation was developed on the basis of an exhaustive study of significant documents, articles and reports. Further development of an outline of different sections of the dissertation served to focus the review of specific materials. This process eventually clarified the outline of sections and sub-sections of the dissertation and also helped to determine which documents were relevant to which sub-sections. Documents belonging to different sub-sections were classified systematically. While classifying the documents, a method of cross-referencing was developed for the purpose of identifying materials useful for more than one sub-section.

## Case Studies

Three different countries -- Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua -- were selected for the purpose of case analysis of nonformal adult education. The rationale for analyzing selected countries was to identify experiences which would provide insight and knowledge for formulating a framework of nonformal adult education that has potential for mitigating educational deprivation and developmental problems in rural areas of Nepal.

Selection of these countries was based on a number of criteria. First, the three countries represent three different geographical contexts: Asia, Africa and Latin America. A focus on a diverse geographical context promised to offer broad experiences. Second, except for Nicaragua, the countries are similar in terms of the annual economic growth rate. Basically, agriculture accounts for the major share of the gross domestic product. In terms of GNP indicator, Nicaragua seems to be better off; however, in the Latin American context it is the lowest income country after Bolivia (World Bank, 1989). In the range of low income developing countries, Nicaragua's position is not exceptional. Third, the illiteracy problem appears to be almost similar in the three countries. Both Tanzania and Nicaragua were able to reduce illiteracy after launching a national level literacy campaign.

In contrast, Bangladesh presents a different scenario in terms of attacking illiteracy. Fourth, in all three countries there is one national language, although some minority groups of people speaking their own dialects also exist. Finally, the poverty situation in the three countries represented by short life expectancy and lack of health services, low income and increased rate of population growth appear to be of similar nature. Such similarities provide a justification for the selection of these countries. Table 1 provides some important indicators on the three countries.

For the purpose of the case studies, ERIC, UNESCO and other national and international data bases were used to identify literature on adult, nonformal and related areas. Various types of literature such as books, research and evaluation reports, journals, dissertation abstracts and country reports were collected and examined. Relevant ideas were summarized and implications for Nepal were developed.

### Field Study

Data in the field component of the study were obtained from personnel at the policy, programming, and implementation levels of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Nepal, and other agencies as well as from participants in nonformal adult education programs. In particular, emphasis was placed on describing these programs in terms of goals, target groups, methods and materials. Selected participants were asked to assess the impact of the programs and to make suggestions for improvement.

The number of respondents in each category varied; there were nine policy makers, seven program level individuals, seven facilitators and thirteen program participants (see Appendix A). Questions asked of the policy makers focused on rural development needs of Nepal, barriers to rural development, usefulness of nonformal adult education to address rural development needs, types of nonformal adult education programs and suggestions for an effective policy. The program level individuals were asked about the operational and organizational aspects of the current nonformal adult education program and also about

Table 1

Some Major Indicators[1] of Selected Countries

| Countries | GNP Per Capita US$ (1987) | Average Annual Growth Rate (% in terms of GDP 1980-87) | Adult Illiteracy[2] | National Language | Crude Death Rate Per Thousand Population 1987 | Life Expectancy at Birth (years) | Share of Agriculture in GDP[3] (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bangladesh (Asia) | 160 | 3.8 | 67% (Approx.) | Bangla | 15 | 51 | 54.3 |
| Nepal (Asia) | 160 | 4.7 | 61% (Approx.) | Nepali | 15 | 51 | 55.0 |
| Nicaragua[4] (Latin America) | 830 | -0.3 | More than 50% (Before the campaign) 25% (After the campaign) | Spanish | 8 | 63 | 25.8 |
| Tanzania (Africa) | 180 | 1.7 | 75% (Before the campaign) 10% (After the campaign) | Swahili | 14 | 53 | 45.4 |

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[1] World Development Report, World Bank, 1989.

[2] Sources cited in each specific country's case analysis.

[3] Kurian, G. T. (1987).

[4] Lowest income country in Latin America after Bolivia.

their views for further improvement of the program. The facilitators were interviewed regarding their roles and functions, the types of the programs which they operated and also their views of possibilities for improvement. Finally, the participants were asked about the types of learning programs in which they are involved, strengths and weaknesses of these programs and also about their views and reactions regarding the usefulness of an integrated type of nonformal adult education.

In order to collect data, questionnaires and interview guides were developed that reflect the current status and need for further improvement of nonformal adult education (see Appendix B, C, D and E). The sixteen policy makers and program level participants provided responses in Nepali which were translated into English by the researcher. Prior to actual data collecting activities, the researcher contacted prospective participants individually and explained the purpose of the study and the research approach. In addition, the researcher also maintained contact with participants in order to impress upon them the importance of the study and of their particular contribution.

The next two categories of respondents -- facilitators and participants -- were all from the district of Nuwakot which is approximately 120 kilometres from Kathmandu. Interviews were conducted by the researcher and staff members from the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) of Tribhuvan University in Nepali. The interviewers spent some time with the people discussing the community development needs and problems, and also observed adult learning activities. This strategy helped to establish good rapport with the interviewees. A number of research and development projects have been conducted in the district by CERID. Consequently, both facilitators and program participants were generally knowledgeable about the nature of nonformal education and were able to base their views on substantial past experience. The district is also relatively advanced socially and economically. In general, the facilitators and participants constituted a select group in terms of both experience and social circumstances.

Data collected in the way described above were analyzed through the process of content analysis. Initially developed for numerical methods of data analysis (Borg & Gall, 1983), content analysis was later used as well for non-numerical data (Merriam & Simpson, 1984). Currently, content analysis is one of the important methods for non-numerical data analysis (Berg, 1989). Data on various themes of nonformal adult education, especially with respect to purposes and objectives, nature and characteristics, program activities, strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions were obtained through the administration of questionnaires and interview guides. Responses from different categories of subjects for each specific area were organized separately. Such an approach enabled identification and presentation of similar ideas.

The nature of the study is such that concepts of validity and reliability have limited meaning; however, notions such as credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) are relevant to a degree. An extensive study of critiques and a detailed review of various innovative ideas and propositions was carried out in order to address credibility, dependability and confirmability of the literature data.

For the purpose of attaining credibility of the study, all data collected through literature review were cross referenced to identify congruent ideas. In order to maintain dependability, documentation of data trails was maintained; a focus on major philosophical orientations of nonformal education was emphasized. Confirmability of the study was enhanced by emphasis on recorded data.

Concerns about credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the field study were also taken into consideration. As regards credibility, the researcher identified various questions to be addressed, developed suitable questionnaires and interview guides and administered them to different participants. In addition, the researcher involved himself as the main actor throughout the entire field study phase. The three research assistants who were involved in the field study worked directly under the researcher's guidance. Issues of dependability and confirmability were attended to by establishing good rapport with those who provided information by recognizing them as participants in the research process, by relying on the dialogical process to uncover their ideas and by cross examining ideas of various participants to identify commonalties. Particular attention was given to ensuring that essential meanings were not distorted in the process of translating questionnaire responses and interview data from Nepali into English, especially in those instances when departures from direct literal translations seemed advisable. Similarity to the setting will be the determining factor in relation to degree of transferability of results of the field study to other contexts.

## Assumptions, Delimitations and Limitations

The problem of improving the quality of life of illiterate rural people is characterized by various needs. Prescription of a specific perspective on nonformal education may not be adequate to address diverse needs. Therefore, it was assumed that an integration of strengths of various perspectives on nonformal education might create a more effective strategy which would be appropriately responsive to the crucial developmental needs of disadvantaged illiterate adults.

The study was delimited to the development of a conceptual framework of nonformal education for a specific context. In other words, this framework was devised mainly in relation to the learning needs and the nature of living conditions of Nepalese illiterate adults. Moreover, developing the framework was generally restricted to analyzing concepts in the literature and to experiences in selected countries.

A limitation of the study is that the literature reviewed might not adequately reflect practice in nonformal education. There might be new and meaningful developments in or experiences with nonformal education which are not reported in the literature. Other educational literature may be relevant to analyzing perspectives on nonformal education and developing implications for a specific context. A further limitation is that the district from which nonformal education program facilitators and participants were selected is not absolutely typical of rural Nepal. Prospective participants in future nonformal education programs in more remote areas would not be able to base their views on comparable experiences and would likely express their needs in a different way.

## Organization of the Report

The report on the study consists of six major parts. The opening part, Chapter 1, presents the research problem, the conceptual basis of the study and an overview of the general research strategy. The second part, Chapters 2 and 3, focuses on the conceptual and philosophical aspects of the study. In Chapter 2 the concept of nonformal education is explored in relation to formal, informal, lifelong and adult education. The nature, objectives and characteristics of nonformal education are examined in depth. Four alternative philosophical perspectives -- radical emancipatory, liberal emancipatory, human resource development and rural development -- are explored in Chapter 3.

Case studies of experiences with nonformal education in three settings are presented in the third part. One chapter is devoted to each of three countries: Chapter 4 to Bangladesh, Chapter 5 to Tanzania and Chapter 6 to Nicaragua. The specific features of particular approaches to nonformal education in each context are described and analyzed. In the fourth part attention shifts to Nepal. Chapter 7 focuses on previous and current efforts at nonformal education in the Nepalese context. The two following Chapters, 8 and 9, contain a report of the field study conducted in Nepal.

The substance of the fifth part of the report, Chapter 10, focuses on a proposed framework for nonformal education while Chapter 11 includes proposed approaches to planning and implementation. In developing these proposals recognition is given to the relevance of the context and history of Nepal as well as to alternative philosophical perspectives. The report concludes with Chapter 12, which contains a summary and an overview of the research project.

# CHAPTER 2

# A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF NONFORMAL EDUCATION

Educators have frequently encountered conceptual confusion regarding relationships between nonformal and other approaches to learning such as formal, informal and adult education. Concerns about clarity regarding the extent to which these strategies for learning differ or overlap are often expressed. The terms "adult education" and "nonformal education" are sometimes used interchangeably; at other times they have different meanings. In an attempt to provide conceptual clarification, this chapter explores the relationships among nonformal, formal and informal education as well as between nonformal and adult education. The core of the analysis is focused on the general concept, on the objectives and on the characteristics of nonformal education.

## Alternative Educational Strategies

An understanding of the extent to which various educational strategies differ from or are related to each other provides some basic insights into the concept of nonformal education. Evans (1981), as well as Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973), identified the different nature of three strategies for learning: formal, nonformal and informal. Formal education takes place in schools, colleges, universities or other educational institutions where educational programs tend to be hierarchically structured. Usually, age-graded classes are conducted in accordance with a prescribed curriculum. Nonformal education, as the term implies, occurs outside of the formal structure and of the prescribed curriculum. Normally, learners and those who guide the process organize instruction in response to needs and interests identified by the participants. In contrast, informal education occurs in situations where neither the learner nor the source of instruction makes conscious efforts to engage in learning activities.

More specific differences between informal and nonformal education can be identified by the way in which the learning process takes place. An informal strategy of learning does not involve any organizational relationship between learners and "teachers." When people become motivated to learn something, they find ways to engage in independent learning. In contrast, nonformal education involves an organized way of learning that is agreed to by both teachers and learners but is conducted outside of the formal structure of an educational system. The essential difference between nonformal and formal education is that the formal system operates through schools in which officially recognized teachers provide instruction based on a prescribed curriculum. Nonformal education serves the needs of participants through organized learning activities outside of formal structures such as schools.

Rather than viewing formal, nonformal and informal education as distinct entities, La Belle (1982) proposed that they should be considered as three different modes of learning. Table 2 which is based on La Belle (1982, p. 162) indicates the interrelationships among these modes.

Table 2

The Modes and Characteristics of Education

| | Characteristics | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mode | Formal | Nonformal | Informal |
| Formal | Graded hierarchy schools | Extra-curricular | Peer group |
| Nonformal | Certificates | Systematic<br>Out of school | Participation |
| Informal | Workplace | Parent instruction | Daily experience |

As is evident from the Table, a certain mode of education with particular characteristics may also include characteristics of other modes. In this connection, La Belle (1982) suggested that in a classroom along with the formal mode represented by the teacher passing on the prescribed curriculum, there is also likely to be occurrence of the informal mode represented by the interaction of peers. Similarly, the nonformal characteristics of extracurricular activities are present when such activities are carried out in the formal mode. In the same way, the nonformal mode displays formal characteristics when participants trained under this mode receive certificates. The informal mode, on the other hand, shows formal characteristics when it occurs in the workplace. In other words, characteristics of the different modes of education are not mutually exclusive.

Table 2 also suggests that there is no strict delineation among these three modes of education. Since learning involves human relationships, which may take different forms due to multiple learning needs and may require the use of different modes of education, the approaches to learning cannot be separated meaningfully. Nonformal education is not likely to remain uninfluenced by the other modes of education. Nevertheless, nonformal education does have distinctive features, in particular, that meaning and value rest basically on flexibility and on serving the learning needs of disadvantaged groups in a society. Today, there is increasing recognition of the importance of nonformal education as a means for satisfying basic education and development needs. In view of this trend, a more detailed examination of the concept of nonformal education is warranted.

## Evolving Educational Perspectives

Recent conceptual developments have helped to enrich and strengthen the concept of nonformal education. Two important perspectives -- education as learning and education as a lifelong process -- that provide the base for developing the concept of nonformal education merit special attention.

### Educational Issues

Three different sources of ideas -- practitioners of nonformal education, international educational planners, and critics of schooling -- were crucial to the evolution of the concept of nonformal education (Evans, 1981). The first source included a large number of practitioners who were involved in improving the economic, environmental, educational and health conditions of marginalized people. These practitioners have, for many years, been engaged in conducting a wide variety of learning activities including adult education, functional literacy, agricultural extension, cooperative education, population education, family-life planning, nutrition education, and community development education. Support for conducting these varied learning activities for educationally deprived adults appears to have been prompted by the notion of human capital. Schultz (1987) and Woodhall (1987) described human capital as the development of human productive potential through the provision of educational inputs and training.

The second source included educational planners and policy makers who, realizing the crisis in the limited capability of formal educational systems to facilitate the development process, stressed the value of nonformal education. Educational planners have prepared detailed analyses of the formal system's inability to respond to education as well as to development needs. While reflecting on critical educational issues such as wide ranging learning needs, the growing financial problems, widening incompatibility between education and employment, and expanding educational disparities and inequalities, Coombs (1982) emphasized the need for a much more flexible educational strategy than the linear expansion of a multi-factorially constrained formal system. Simmons (1980) presented fairly similar views when he identified educational issues such as high dropout rates, lack of physical and instructional facilities, lack of curricular relevance, and lack of equal educational opportunities within the formal system. Rubension (1987) commented on the crises faced by the formal system even in European and Nordic countries, and Bekele (1985) focused on the scenario of the formal system in Africa where an urban-biased approach, a lack of relevance and high dropout rates exist as the major problems. Wijetunga (1985) analyzed the South-Asian situation in terms of the various constraints such as a prescriptive curriculum, an elite-bias and the lack of instructional support that prevailed in the formal system. In general, the numerous deficiencies of the formal system led educational planners to focus on the potential of a nonformal approach to learning.

The third source consisted of critics of schooling who did not see any contribution being made by rigidly structured school systems to bringing about positive changes in the social and psychological conditions of learners, let alone contributing to economic development. A number of critics dismissed the relevance of the organization and operation of formal schools entirely.

Goodman (1964) recommended alternative ways of educating. He analyzed critically various aspects of schooling such as the extent to which schools play a major role in preparing learners to cope with an increasingly complex world; in providing employment opportunities for unemployed youths; in serving as an equalizer of opportunities for the under-privileged as well as in facilitating creativity in business practice, social work, mental hygiene and genuine literacy. In reality, he argued, schools do not fulfill any of these goals to an acceptable degree. Illich (1971) advocated the deschooling of society, since in his view schools had failed to meet social and individual needs. Holt (1972) saw the attempts to use schools to educate people as futile. Instead, he regarded the whole society around the learners and the varied life experiences as educating much more effectively than schools. Reimer (1972) made critical remarks about schools observing that they not only lack abilities to resolve social contradictions but also reflect these contradictions within their structures and processes. Consequently, he suggested that education should be freed from the schools. Kozol (1982) advocated a shift in the conventional pattern of schools toward the introduction of schooling which is responsive to the needs and wishes of people.

Freire (1970) argued for a pedagogy of liberation because educational activities conducted formally in schools neglect to foster learners' potential. Schools attempt to socialize learners through a prescriptive curriculum which is implemented in a restrictive way, thereby diminishing the influence of the students' role. Freire (1970, 1975) not only recommended structural change in the teaching-learning system but also stressed the need for conducting nonformal education as a form of cultural action designed to "conscientize" learners and eventually to lead them to act in order to transform an oppressive reality.

All of these critics of schooling seem to be moving in the same direction, namely, toward a form of learning that attends to broadening the mental horizons of learners by means of educational programs outside the predominantly bureaucratic and elite-biased formal structure. Basically, educational planners and critics of schooling held similar views regarding the inability of schools to alleviate problems associated with human and economic development. The critics of schooling went even further in favoring radical changes in the structure of formal education. In their view, education should be a force for the liberation of human beings.

Another dimension in the conceptual framework of nonformal education is "liberalism." Various advocates of liberal adult education have emphasized the need for an unconstrained environment allowing freedom for intellectual exercise in a learning situation. For instance, John Dewey argued that human intelligence could be fostered if learning were based on liberal relationships between the learners and the tutors (Cross-Durrant, 1987), Albert Mansbridge dismissed a controlled environment as inappropriate in an educational process (Alfred, 1987), R.H. Tawney pleaded for intellectual emancipation (Elsey, 1987), Eduard Lindeman de-emphasized authoritative approaches to learning (Brookfield, 1987), and Roby Kidd believed in autonomy in learning for adults (Thomas, 1987). Similarly, Malcolm Knowles and Carl Rogers, among others, were major forces behind the support for self-directed learning by adults (Jarvis, 1987). Moreover, Rogers (1983) elaborated the concept of liberalism by emphasizing learners' interaction, a participatory mode of decision making, and the role of the teacher as a facilitator in the learning environment.

### A Lifelong Timeframe

As has been indicated, the evolution of the concept of nonformal education has been influenced by critical analyses of education. A specific aspect of this analysis relates to the locus or venue of educational activities. Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973) proposed that educational activities do not have to be time-bound and place-bound because education is a lifelong process that can take place in any environment without any formal structures. The notion of lifelong education was implicit -- long before Coombs and his colleagues focused on the concept -- in John Dewey's contribution to educational philosophy which emphasized the need for learning as a continuous process throughout human life (Cross-Durrant, 1984).

The members of a Unesco task force presented an informative perspective on lifelong education when they stated:

> Man is an unfinished being and can only fulfill himself through constant learning. If this is so, then education takes place at all ages of life, in all situations and circumstances of existence. It returns to its true nature, which is to be total and lifelong, and transcends the limits of institutions, programs and methods imposed on it down the centuries. (Faure, Herrera, Abdul-Razzak, Lopes, Petrovsky, Rehnema & Ward, 1972, p. 143)

This statement clearly suggests the possibility for lifelong learning in any situation and for human beings to satisfy their learning needs without any constraints. The conceptualization of lifelong learning was a major contribution to broadening the scope of education. This concept encouraged the development of educational activities beyond the formal system, even though lifelong education also encompasses the formal system. In terms of a lifelong education concept, learning activities can be organized both formally and nonformally.

Various authors have presented views similar to that reflected in the preceding definition of lifelong education. Cross-Durrant (1984) regarded lifelong education as a meaningful part of an individual's education starting from pre-school years and continuing through adulthood. Since people have to face uncertainty as a consequence of the "knowledge explosion" and also because they have to prepare themselves to assume the different roles necessitated by rapid social and technological changes, learning must be a lifelong process. Pena-Borrero (1984) indicated that lifelong education made a breakthrough in the monopoly enjoyed by the conventional system of education with its emphasis on learning opportunities for people of all ages through varied strategies. Essentially, different views of lifelong education consistently reflect the notion of the democratization of education in an effort to ensure maintaining and improving the quality of people's lives.

The concept of lifelong education shifts attention from schooling to learning. Knowledge and skills acquired through schooling may not be adequate to satisfy the diverse needs and problems that human beings encounter because schooling operates under a number of constraints. First, the learning objectives and programs are prescribed by a bureaucratic system. Second, scanning crucial needs and envisioning responsive learning programs tend to be overlooked. Third, schooling may be regarded primarily as a means for producing a workforce to serve the economic system and may give low priority to learning activities that have potential to bring about qualitative improvements in life.

Although all human beings strive to survive and succeed, the skills and knowledge that are required to do so cannot be easily demarcated. Human life involves many unforeseeable circumstances; in order to cope with them, knowledge and skills have to be acquired continuously. Various needs arising out of such circumstances cannot be fulfilled with what is learned through schooling. Education as learning for life includes much more than the conventional "academic" skills and subject areas. Occupational skills, household skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, and the development of aesthetic appreciation are some examples which fall within the scope of learning (Coombs, Prosser & Ahmed, 1973). Diverse areas of learning have relevance in relation to learners' varied life needs; consequently, nonformal education assumes importance as a need-responsive strategy for learning.

## Defining Characteristics of Nonformal Education

The evolution of the concept of nonformal education, as described in the preceding section, was based on the outcome of a focus by educators on diversified learning and training needs, analyses of critical issues of the formal system by educational planners, and advocacy by the critics of schooling for emancipation from the socializing processes of conventional approaches to education. In addition, advocates of liberalism contributed by adding another dimension to the conceptual framework of nonformal education.

To a considerable extent, these developments proceeded in the absence of a clear definition of nonformal education. This oversight was eventually addressed by Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973), when they defined nonformal education as

> any organized educational activity outside the established formal system -- whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity -- that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives.(p. 11)

They provided further clarification of the concept with a supplementary statement to the effect that

> any educational activity falls into the nonformal category if (a) it is consciously and purposively organized and systematically pursued, (b) with a view to facilitating particular kinds of learning by a particular learning clientele and (c) it is not an integral part of the formal educational system. (p. 11)

In general, nonformal education -- defined in the above statements -- is any organized learning activity outside the formal structure with a curriculum geared towards meeting participants' needs for improving the quality of their lives.

A similar meaning of nonformal education is evident in the following statement proposed by the University of Massachusetts (1971):

> Nonformal education is generally seen as need - oriented, . . . utilitarian . . . and cheaper than the formal systems. Often it is tied to some productive activity . . . and is characterized by . . . peer learning flexibility. Students, if the word be retained, generally enrol in nonformal courses because they are interested in what can be learned - not because it counts for a degree . . . And nonformal education does not engender elitist feelings among its students. (p. 1)

This statement sheds light on some characteristics of nonformal education such as being needs-based, non-graded, flexible and non-elitist.

Neihoff (1977) described nonformal education as a strategy of involving participants in productive activities which would improve their general conditions of living. More specifically, he viewed nonformal education as

> essentially a method of defining developmental needs and formulating programs of communication and education to increase the participation of the rural poor in agricultural production and in programs of nutrition, rural health delivery systems, family planning and other programs designed to improve their productivity and welfare, if not survival. (p. 11)

Adiseshiah (cited by Commonwealth secretariat, 1980) defined nonformal education from yet another perspective. He stated:

> Nonformal education...feeds back into our societies a rather grim and explosive power process by assisting the poor and down-trodden majority of the people to organize themselves so as to end the state of injustice in which they have been forced to live in. (p. 7)

In other words, Adiseshiah perceived nonformal education as a process of empowerment of the marginalized segment of society for emancipation from oppression and injustice. His notion of nonformal education basically conforms to Freire's radical pedagogy.

The meanings of nonformal education as expressed by its advocates extend over a wider range. Their different ideas lead to visualizing nonformal education in varying terms such as a force of liberation, a basis for increasing productivity, a system of literacy programing, and an approach to meeting basic human needs. Instead of narrowing the scope of the discussion of nonformal education by limiting it to a specific focus, the area can be viewed from a global perspective. In other words, the objectives of nonformal education may be viewed as a basis for improving the quality of life socially, culturally, politically and economically. Such an intent of nonformal education has the potential to help people to attain better ways of living.

In addition to discussing its nature and objectives, various writers have also examined general and specific characteristics of nonformal education. Brembeck (1977) highlighted the general characteristics of nonformal education in the following statement:

> Nonformal education is sometimes called the silent educational "system". It does not require elaborate campuses and buildings. Its "curricula" will not often be found spelled out in catalogues or brochures. Yet nonformal education occurs almost everywhere - wherever development programs are underway. Participants in these programs rarely identify themselves as "students". Furthermore, teaching is done by those who do not normally think of themselves as "teachers"- professionals and paraprofessionals from ministries of agriculture, public health and other development fields as well as from formal educational organizations. (p. vii)

This statement identifies the general features of nonformal education as being participant-centred, needs-based, facilitated by resource persons and involving different groups of people as participants. Harrison's (1978) description of the characteristics of nonformal education appears similar to that of Brembeck (1977). Harrison (1978) stated that

> in particular, it should function around the central interests of the learner; be nonformal in organization; delivered as and when required; be learner rather than teacher-centred; draw its legitimacy from relevance to community needs rather than to esoteric academic standards. (p. 19)

This statement also describes nonformal education as flexible, participant-centred, needs-based, and adjustable to the convenience of the participants. Adiseshiah (as cited by Singh, 1987) and Gazardo (1985) presented fairly similar ideas. They emphasized the importance of designing nonformal education programs with a focus on various experiences and needs of the participants. Botkin (quoted by Selman, 1987) viewed nonformal education as being pro-active rather than reactive in nature because the learning activities are designed on the basis of learning needs. Similarly, nonformal education attends to innovative learning rather than reactive learning, because it tends to enable the participants to look for solutions in anticipation of problems. La Belle (1986) viewed a number of characteristics of nonformal education as its strengths. In particular, a needs-based approach to learning outside the formal structure without competition for higher grades and certificates gave a new perspective on learning as a means for bringing about qualitative changes in life.

In addition to these characteristics, a number of criteria were considered for the implementation of nonformal education programs. Factors relevant to the implementation of nonformal education relate to the structural support for the actors and for the learning process. Considering the potential of nonformal education for enabling the mass of marginalized people to bring about qualitative changes in their lives, a national commitment to the development of nonformal education is desirable. For the fulfillment of such a commitment, some features might be viewed as essential. Coles (1982) stated that in order to develop and expand effective nonformal education programs and to generate significant outcomes from them, they should be made an integral part of national development plans, be carefully planned as a national service, and be an integral program of the national education system with increased resource support. Moreover, educators, development planners, policy makers and administrators should be actively involved in promoting nonformal education. Preparation of trained personnel for program implementation is another important aspect. Regarding the process of developing learning experiences, Brown (1981) stressed that steps should be taken to use the wisdom of people to understand social norms, values and practices of the target population as well as to involve indigenous social organizations, local leaders and paraprofessionals.

## Nonformal and Adult Education

Contextual variation, diverse learning objectives, and the nature and level of learner participation are some major factors that determine the relationships between adult and nonformal education. The two approaches may also be differentiated along these dimensions.

The Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973) definition of nonformal education as any organized educational program outside the formal system is frequently quoted and appears to be the most widely accepted definition. The definition is sufficiently broad to encompass many types of learning programs such as adult education, functional literacy, rural and agriculture education, cooperative education, population and family life education, nutrition education, and community development education. Therefore, nonformal education programs also apply, among others, to adult learning activities taking place outside of the formal system.

With the emergence of the concept of nonformal education in late 1960s, the term came to be widely used in most of the developing countries; however, the term adult education or adult literacy also continued to be used to refer to highly similar activities and programs. The terms "adult education" and "nonformal education" are used interchangeably in some contexts but refer to different types of programs in other contexts. Generally, in the context of industrialized societies adult education tends to be organized and offered in ways similar to those associated with formal education. Adult education does not necessarily mean literacy, functional literacy, extension or family-life program designed with flexibility but may even include higher education and may be conducted with observance of virtually all characteristics of formal institutions. In other words, there does not appear to be a clear distinction between adult and formal education.

More formal features in the concept of adult education in the West may be linked to the influence of a rapidly changing technology. Another factor might be the influence of the Western philosophy of adult education. The conceptualization of adult education by some western authors may help to clarify the question. Shafritz, Koeppe and Soper (1988) defined adult education as

> instruction designed to meet the unique needs of adults and youth -- beyond the age of compulsory school attendance -- who have either completed or interrupted their formal education. This may be provided by a school system, college or other agency or institution (including a technical institute or area vocational school) through activities and media such as formal classes, correspondence study, radio, television, lectures, concerts, demonstrations and counseling. (p. 17)

Almost identical views were expressed by Page and Thomas (1977), when they defined adult education as

> education provided for adults for general educational, rather than vocational, reasons. Adult education may be provided by a college/university, extra mural department or extension studies or other sponsoring organizations such as the Workers' Educational Association. It has much in common with education permanent, lifelong education and recurrent education. (p. 13)

Basically, these statements view adult education as consisting of programs conducted within formal structures such as schools, colleges and universities. There is wider acceptance of adult education as an activity which can be designed and implemented in the same way as the formal educational programs. A Unesco general conference held in Nairobi (1976) proposed the definition of adult education as

> the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level and method, whether formal or otherwise...whereby persons regarded as adult in the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development. (Quoted by Roberts, 1982, p. 15)

As a world organization consisting of both developed and developing nations, Unesco had to provide a broad definition because adult education is conceived differently in different cultural contexts. Before Unesco became aware of this reality, adult education tended to be considered as lying outside the formal system. In an earlier definition, Unesco (1974) portrayed adult education as equivalent to out-of-school education and as education provided for the benefit of educationally deprived adults.

Alternative conceptions of adult education revolve around two aspects: formal and nonformal. An emphasis on the formal aspect seems to have prevailed in the technologically advanced industrialized societies, particularly in the West. The nonformal aspect has been prominent in the less developed nations of the world where adult education frequently means adult literacy programs. Despite the dichotomy of the formal and nonformal aspects of adult education -- a formal design being common in the West and a nonformal in the less developed world -- these two forms of adult education should not be compartmentalized as existing in two different worlds. Depending upon the extent to which educational and other needs are present in either developing or developed societies, application of either formal or nonformal forms of adult education may be appropriate. Even in the developed world, the problem of illiteracy is increasing along with other basic development problems for which nonformal approaches might be highly relevant. Kozol's (1985) description of the illiteracy problem in the United States is an example of this type of situation. He brought to light the problem of educational deprivation of the poor and of the minorities in the United States as a result of the American government's educational policy.

In all societies, whether developed or underdeveloped, the socio-economic structure is characterized by a diversity of human needs ranging from basic to higher levels. In order to respond to such a wide array of needs, multi-pronged strategies of learning are required. Considering adult education as one such strategy, it holds a generally important place. However, deciding on the specific form of adult education program depends on the needs of the target groups that are to be addressed. An adult education program designed in a nonformal fashion is highly relevant in responding to literacy as well as in addressing basic needs of illiterate adults.

Nonformal adult education approaches may be justified on the ground that recognition of need-based and participant-centred characteristics will help to motivate illiterate adults to join the program and to participate in the learning activities. On the other hand, if the objective of an adult education program is to produce highly trained manpower, then more formal characteristics may be appropriate because the needs to be fulfilled relate to producing materials and not to addressing various needs of participants. In general, similarities and differences between adult and nonformal education depend upon the design, methods and objectives of learning.

## Summary

The need to clarify the concept of nonformal education derives, in part, from the complexity of educational activities and, in part, from the ways in which educators describe those activities. Although nonformal education can be defined in ways that accentuate its unique features, some of the characteristics are present also in formal and informal educational strategies. The development and evolution of thought on the distinctive features of nonformal education was influenced by critical analyses of formal education and by consideration of education as a lifelong process. Educators and educational planners were prompted to develop the concept of the observed deficiencies in the formal system including high dropout rates, increasing costs, lack of facilities and limited evidence of improvements in social conditions.

In general, nonformal education is intended to provide learning opportunities to all educationally deprived learners in an unrestricted manner. The activities are conducted outside of the formal structures of an educational system, and the curriculum is oriented toward meeting the needs of the learners. Effectiveness of nonformal education is assessed in terms of the extent to which the activities contribute to improving the quality of life of the participants. Flexibility and accessibility are defining characteristics of nonformal education. In addition, the learning is intended to be participant-centred and needs-based. Emergence of the concept is associated with the move toward increasing educational opportunities.

Nonformal education is closely related to the concept of adult education. However, there are both similarities and differences between the two concepts. Some of the differences vary across economically developed and developing contexts. In the more industrialized countries, the formal aspects of adult education tend to be emphasized while in developing countries the emphasis tends to be on nonformal strategies.

# CHAPTER 3

# THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON NONFORMAL EDUCATION

Four different perspectives on nonformal education are presented in this chapter. Following an initial overview, the radical and liberal emancipatory perspectives are examined in terms of their philosophies, focus areas, assumptions and values, and methodologies. This is followed by a similar analysis of the human resource development and rural development perspectives on nonformal education. A discussion based on comparison of the perspectives concludes the chapter.

## Overview of the Perspectives

Emancipatory perspectives on education can have either a radical or a liberal orientation. The radical perspective gives emphasis to raising critical political awareness of disadvantaged people, mainly for the purpose of engaging in an organized struggle against social and economic oppression. The liberal perspective, in contrast, stresses the need for releasing latent energies and capabilities of the people who are expected to deal eventually with such circumstances.

Development perspectives on nonformal adult education encompass both human resource development and rural development orientations. The major focus of the former lies in developing the productivity of human beings through skill and technical training, while the latter emphasizes not only skill formation but also application involving the reorientation of existing institutions and the development of new infrastructures.

A basic purpose which underlies the analysis of the four perspectives is to provide the basis for assessing in what respects they might be viewed as alternatives and in what respects they might be complementary in relation to a specific context. Both the specific context and the question of complementarity are addressed in Chapter 10. The emphasis in this chapter is on analyzing rather than on applying the four perspectives.

## The Radical Perspective

The foundations of the radical emancipatory perspective on nonformal education are based in a critical analysis of existing educational structures and processes. In the analysis the conventional system is criticized for its failure to ensure egalitarianism, freedom and prosperity for everyone. Instead of contributing to these objectives, education has been a means for perpetuating social and economic contradictions and stratifications. The radical perspective addresses the shortcomings of the conventional system by advocating an approach that involves learning for empowerment, as is evident from a consideration of the general philosophy, basic values and methodology.

### Philosophy

Critics of the formal system have pointed out numerous persistent shortcomings. For example, Freire (1970) suggested that systems of education were being used as a strategy for domestication, dehumanization and domination. London (1973) expressed similar views in stating that the dominant power structures, by virtue of their social and economic privileges, controlled curricular programs that propagated various myths which helped maintain the status quo. Carnoy (1985) argued that the existing educational system serves as a human processing plant through which social and economic reproduction is ensured resulting in the deepening of the socio-economic hierarchy and of inequalities. Apple (1990) also stated that ideological indoctrination and acculturalization by the dominant power structure was the prime focus of the educational system. In a similar manner, Holt (1972), Reimer (1972), and Illich (1971) have attacked the formal structure and curriculum as being irrelevant to fulfilling human needs for freedom, prosperity and equality.

Among the critics of the formal education system, Freire (1970) appears to be an ardent advocate not only of abandoning the system but also of supporting alternatives which liberate people. Specifically, Freire conceptualized radical emancipatory pedagogy as a strategy for combatting socio-economic oppression and contradictions in contrast to the domesticating nature of the formal system. He argued that the participants, in education, are usually treated as objects rather than as subjects in command of their lives. As objects, they are subjected to learning prescriptions by tutors who supposedly know what is best. In effect, the tutors act as "depositors" and the participants as "depositories." This approach to teaching and learning, which Freire refers to as a "banking system," acts as a barrier to the development of the full human potential of participants. Moreover, the participants are attuned to conform to the consciousness of the tutors, thereby restricting the development of their own critical awareness. Consequently, they become submerged in the "culture of silence" and are fully "domesticated" to serve the needs of oppressors (Freire, 1970, 1975). As a result of a domesticating education, the participants internalize the values, beliefs and attitudes which are instrumental in strengthening the status quo that is characterized by the oppressor-oppressed relationship.

Freire's liberationist pedagogy embraces the objective of enabling participants to attain their vocation of full humanity (Alfred, 1984). Realizing this objective depends on nourishing people's knowledge and capability for critical thinking as well as instilling the conviction that they are creative beings with self-worth and self-capabilities. Creation of knowledge is viewed as a dynamic process which, according to Freire (1970), arises from mutual interaction between thinking and doing. Human beings have potential to create knowledge through their own agency and action. As Freire (1970) stated:

> The difference between animals...and men is that only the latter are beings of praxis. Only men *are* praxis -- the praxis which, as the reflection and action which truly transform reality, is the source of knowledge and creation. (pp. 90-91)

If human beings are the source of knowledge, then the purpose of education should be to tap this source by energizing them so that they can change an oppressive reality (Alfred, 1984). Centred around this purpose resides a philosophy that views education as a force for achieving liberation, humanism and equality.

Freire's philosophy of education is eclectic in that it draws on liberal democratic theory, radical or liberation theology, revolutionary socialism and existentialist philosophy. Rooted in these theories are the concepts of democracy, conscientization, praxis and dialogue, an integration of which constitutes the Freirean philosophy of liberating education.

## Assumptions and Values

Within a liberationist perspective, oppressive forces are assumed to contribute to underdevelopment and illiteracy (Carr, 1990). However, an additional assumption is that these oppressive forces can be countered by empowering people. In this respect, Shaull (in Freire, 1970) stated Freire's argument as follows:

> Every human being, no matter how "ignorant" or submerged in the "culture of silence" he may be, is capable of looking critically at his world in a dialogical encounter with others. Provided with the proper tools for such encounter, he can gradually perceive his personal and social reality as well as the contradictions in it, become conscious of his own perception of that reality, and deal critically with it. (p. 13)

Evident in the above statement is the assumption that human beings are assumed to possess critical, analytical and action-prone qualities. These qualities can be realized only when the participants become involved in dialogical learning that is oriented towards overcoming contradictions and engaged in striving for liberation. In other words, raising the critical level of awareness or "conscientization" of the participants enables them to diagnose and then to transform an existing reality.

The pursuit of full humanity, with due regard for conscience as an empowering element for making critical judgement of reality and intervening in that reality for change, is the objective of Freire's liberating education (Srinivasan, 1977). In other words, "praxis" which involves reflecting-acting-reflecting, combining "verbalism" and "activism," is the foundation on which the liberationist view of education is based.

Associated with this perspective are various pedagogical values. Freire placed high value on a humanistic role for educators. Educators should not dictate but should facilitate the pedagogical process. Equality in the relationship between educators and participants is essential if learning is to be effective and energetic. To achieve this relationship, educators and participants need to reconcile themselves to playing each other's role simultaneously; dialogue should become the usual way of learning. Moreover, the educators should never undermine the confidence of participants because, as human beings, they are creative and capable. Similarly, since the relationship between people and the world is of an interactive nature, education must enable people to live with the world and not to live in the world. In other words, education must not lead people to adapt to the world, but rather to capacitate them to live with it. In general, radical emancipatory pedagogical values involve educators and participants in analyzing social reality, identifying contradictions, and subsequently acting to bring about change (Freire, 1970).

Elaborations of a radical emancipatory pedagogy by Freire and others propose that a political orientation must be an inclusive value because only this orientation can capacitate participants to understand, discover, penetrate and unveil reality (Bruss & Macedo, 1984). In this respect, Bruss and Macedo (1984) quote Freire: "The politics of education is the quality that education has to be political. For this reason education is never neutral" (p. 217). Freire and Shor (1987) explain further the values of radical emancipatory pedagogy from various perspectives. Educators are viewed as active agents for changing the status quo which results from interaction between educators and participants. Such interaction is to be advanced through open dialogue, a focus on reality, use of simple but meaningful language, establishing linkages between learning and experiencing, and emphasizing political action that leads to transforming reality. Radical pedagogy would make human beings a force for mounting an aggressive struggle against oppressive processes in order to eliminate socio-economic contradictions.

## Methodology

Freire's approach to radical pedagogy revolves around the concept of "conscientization" which he applied initially in conducting a nonformal adult literacy program in Brazil. The conscientization approach contrasts with the mechanistic way of conducting adult literacy programs which disregard cultural experiences of participants. Freire proposed a "pedagogy of the question" approach which would challenge the participants to think critically and to adopt a critical outlook toward the world. In contrast to the "pedagogy of answer" approach which tends to domesticate the participants, the alternative approach stimulates and challenges the participants to question, to doubt, and to reject (Bruss & Macedo, 1985).

Freire's conscientization approach to learning involves problematizing the natural, cultural and historical reality in which the participants are immersed. Problematizing is viewed as the precursor to problem-solving. Through the process of problematization, as Goulet (1973) states, the participants are led to probe into the reality, thereby developing in themselves a critical consciousness. He further explained that practice for freedom and the praxis of liberation were the crux of Freire's methodology. As Freire (1970) states, "Critical consciousness is brought about...not through an intellectual effort alone, but through praxis -- through the authentic union of action and reflection" (p. 473). For Freire an authentic educational method includes the dialogical cultural action which, he believes, makes emancipation possible. Essentially, this method would be a force to energize human beings to overcome oppression. Following the Freirean approach, La Belle (1986) suggests that the participatory principle will enliven the method of praxis in the learning process and assist in attacking contradictory socio-economic realities. However, Freire (1970) warned that lack of a thorough understanding and true application of his method would result in either domestication or paternalization of participants because the method could be misused by oppressive forces to serve their interests.

With respect to nonformal adult literacy, Freire advocates the method of praxis but he suggests some specific stages towards its implementation:

> "educators'" identification with the vocabulary universe of the people;
>
> search for generative words with syllabic richness which occur in the daily life experiences;
>
> codification of generative words into visual images which stimulate participants' concerns about the situation;
>
> decodification by the participants themselves who are facilitated in this effort by the coordinator; and
>
> a creative new codification which is critical and aimed at action to be initiated by the participants as subjects. (Goulet in Freire, 1973,.p. viii)

These stages are intended to actualize praxis, because the reflection-action cycle is embedded in the process of codification and decodification of reality. Dialogue between educators and participants becomes the critical element in this process. Recognition of the importance of dialogue is the recognition of equal partnership between educators and participants. There is no distinct position for educators and participants; rather, each assumes the other's role. Application of this method in nonformal adult learning contrasts with the remedial processes in which participants are passive and the educator's role is predominant. Learning through praxis evolves effective abilities within the participants, since it activates their internal energies (Roberts, 1982).

The radical emancipatory philosophy has contributed to developing a new perspective on the conceptual and operational aspects of nonformal adult learning. A liberationist approach holds potential to emancipate people from wretched and oppressed conditions. But, in order to realize this potential, political agitation, struggle, and turbulence are closely linked to learning.

## Liberal Perspective

Radical and liberal perspectives tend to have a similar orientation in that they both place emphasis on humanistic approaches to learning. However, the two perspectives differ in terms of their emphasis and methods. The differences are evident in an examination of the more specific aspects of the liberal perspective.

## Philosophy

A humanistic orientation is the crux of liberal perspective on teaching and learning. Human beings are regarded as capable beings, who, if provided with an unrestricted learning environment, actualize themselves through their creative and productive powers. Achieving an actualized stage engenders abilities that eventually form a permanent source of change in people's lives and their environment. In contrast, an authority-centred approach is characterized by acceptance of inequality between educators and participants, the former being the possessor and the latter the recipients of knowledge.

Unlike behaviorists who focus only on extrinsic and environmental determinants of learning, humanists adopt a broad theory of behavior which emphasizes intrinsic determinants (Alonzo, LaCognina & Olsen, 1977). Maslow's (1954) classification of human needs, although sometimes critiqued as an oversimplification, was important in drawing attention to the need for self-actualization as being highly significant for human beings. Within this framework, the goal of education is directed towards enabling learners to become self-actualized, in other words, to acquire the power to realize fully their talents and capabilities. In general, achieving self-actualization has to do with the development of a learner's potential, specifically, the potential to be human, and to understand self and others (Alonzo, LaCognina & Olsen, 1977).

Like Maslow, Rogers (1983) recognized people's potential to grow and to achieve self-actualization. He expressed faith in human beings' intrinsic motivation and ability to learn. However, Rogers (1983) proposed that fostering of learning abilities is possible only when the learning environment is humanistic in the sense that,

> it gives evidence that in a genuinely human climate, which the teacher can initiate, a young person can find him or herself respected, can make responsible choices, can experience the excitement of learning, can lay the

> basis for living as an effective concerned citizen, well informed, competent in knowledge and skills, confident in facing the future. (p. 2)

As the statement indicates, Rogers placed importance on respecting the participants in the process of learning as competent beings who are capable of achieving self-actualization. This idea led him to advocate a student-centred strategy for learning.

Aspy (1972) subscribed to Rogers's idea relating to the student-centred approach to learning which emphasizes treating students as capable people. He believed that this mode of learning would promote student success. Krishnamurti (1963) held the view that learning is a natural urge of human beings which should be fostered through humanistic relationships. He stated that "learning is facilitated when there is an atmosphere of happy affection and thoughtful care" (p. 12). Dubin and Okun (1973) also supported a humanistic perspective in which human beings themselves are the source of change in the phenomenal world.

Adopting a humanistic philosophy of education, various educators such as Knowles (1990, 1984, 1975), Brookfield (1986, 1985, 1981), Tennant (1986), Fisher and Podeschi (1989), Boyer (1984), and Hartree (1984) contributed to conceptualizing a liberal perspective on adult education. Among these theorists, Knowles (1984) was in the forefront in using the concept of andragogy, which means the science and the art of adult education, in explaining the liberal perspective. The basic tenet of this andragogic philosophy "values the learners' life experiences and the need to be self-directed, draws the learner into a commitment to learn by responding to the learners' needs, and involves the learner in directing the conduct and process" (Bard, 1984, p. 8).

Although the nature of the learning is a factor, Knowles (1988) did not deny the relevance of pedagogy -- which is the science and the art of children's education -- in educating adults. Diverse learning contexts require an integration of both pedagogy and andragogy. Nevertheless, the orientation of andragogy largely attends to various psycho-sociological conditions of adults.

The liberal perspective accords considerable importance to the "self" of individuals. Development of "self" is regarded as crucial to making life more meaningful. Drawing on this principle, Knowles (1984) advocated active adult participation in determining their education, in particular, placing an emphasis on self-directed learning. Boyer ((1984) indicated that self-directed learning rests on an organismic model rather than on a mechanistic model of learning. The mechanistic model is characterized by a deterministic and passive perspective on people while the organismic model views human beings as ultimately free and creative. Brookfield (1985, 1981) also supports a participant-centred, self-directed approach to adult education. Tough (1979) accepted humanistic psychology in advocating that adult education should be participant-centred and self-directed. Similarly, Hostler (1986) asserted the need for learner autonomy in adult education; by autonomy he meant independence and self-determination. In general, these philosophical stances advanced by various authors propose that adult education must be based on recognizing learners as capable human beings with dignity, equality and credibility.

## Assumptions and Values

Several assumptions and values are embedded in the liberal adult education perspective. Knowles (1984) explained these assumptions and values. As has been indicated, the concept of andragogy is based on the assumption that people have potential to develop their capabilities for improved living through involvement in identifying the content and process of learning. Knowles (1984) made explicit the following list of assumptions:

> the learner as an adult is capable of self- directing;
>
> adults' experience provides a rich source of learning;
>
> adults become ready to learn when they experience a need to know or do something;
>
> adults learn in order to be able to perform a task, solve a problem, or live comfortably;
>
> the andragogical model predicates that the more potent motivations are internal. (pp. 9-12)

Other adult educators such as Tough (1979) and Hartree (1984) supported Knowles's ideas. Fisher and Podeschi (1989) elaborated Knowles's assumptions further by stating that the achievement of self-power by participants through the use of learner-valued liberal adult education programs would also enhance the relationship between work purpose and human purpose. In other words, they supported Knowles's assumption that proper adult education programing would harmonize institutional and individual needs.

Selman (1987) expressed similar views when he stated that powers generated in individuals through education would enable them to serve their needs and at the same time attend to organizational needs as well. He provided two examples. First, in the case of the Danish Folk High School, the participants' needs for skill in making butter were not only fulfilled but they also achieved the reputation for making the best butter in Europe. Second, in the case of the Workers' Educational Association of Britain, a corps of leaders for organizational and public life was produced through learning activities aimed at developing leadership skills in organizational management. These examples support the view that achievement of self-capabilities has potential to have an impact at the organizational level, as well.

### Methodology

The values associated with a liberal perspective have implications for an appropriate methodology. According to Tennant (1986), facilitators must accept participants as individuals with self-worth and potential to develop their abilities. As human beings equal in status to educators, their feelings and ideas warrant respect. In addition, relationships between participants and educators should be based on mutual trust and cooperation. The level of confidence of participants must be promoted by involving them in diagnosing their needs, setting objectives and contractual agreements, and evaluating outcomes.

Individuals must be given centre stage in the learning process by recognizing their dignity and their needs for autonomy, self-direction and self-development. Moreover, the adult education program should use resources available in the surrounding environment. Among these are individuals with specific skills, peers, material and media, and other potential resources that can make learning activities relevant (Knowles, 1984). A liberal adult education rests generally on humanistic and egalitarian value orientations.

The liberal perspective on adult education advocates an approach that attempts to foster human creativity and to develop productive potential through participant-centred learning in an unrestrained and friendly environment. Knowles (1984) identified a series of steps for applying this methodology:

> climate setting in relation to physical, psychological and human aspects;
> involving learners in mutual planning;
> involving participants in diagnosing their own needs for learning;
> involving participants in formulating their own objectives;
> involving learners in designing their plans;
> helping learners carry out their plans; and
> involving learners in evaluating their learning. (pp. 17-18)

Participants clearly are the focus when it comes to determining the learning programs. Making the participants responsible for their learning is associated with the finding of a study by Tough (1989) which concluded that adults, by virtue of their level of maturity, have the intellect to organize and to operate self-managed learning.

A critical comment regarding this methodology by Fisher and Podeschi (1989) proposed that the approach was characteristic of utilitarianism which would not lead participants to agendas beyond themselves or to attempt to establish connections with events beyond the learners. However, a more supportive response came from Srinivasan (1977) who stated that

> Knowles believes that ego involvement is the key to successful adult education. Accordingly, we must develop educational techniques to enable adults to assess their needs, formulate their own goals, share responsibility in designing and carrying out learning experiences, and evaluate their own programs. (p. 14)

In general, the process involved in a liberal adult education recognizes the central role of the "self" of individual adults in determining the nature of the learning.

## Human Resource Development Perspective

The focus of human resource development is to increase human beings' productive capabilities through training and education. Since human resource development signifies that enhancing the productivity of individuals contributes to wealth generation, this concept is generally equated with that of human capital. Both concepts convey the same meaning, namely, that productive capacities are embodied in people (Imhoff, 1989). Consequently, the perspective developed in this section draws on both concepts.

### Philosophy

The concept of human resource or human capital originated in the work of Adam Smith and Alfred Marshall (Myers, 1967). Adam Smith stated that a nation's progress depends largely on "the skill, dexterity and judgement with which its labor is generally applied" (quoted by La Belle, 1986, p. 98). This general concept served as a basis for subsequent elaboration. Myers (1967) suggested that investment in human resources is as good as investing in physical capital such as construction of roads, harbors, hydro-electric dams, and factories. Similarly, Harbison (1973) felt that a nation's wealth existed in people in the sense that the prosperity of a nation was an outcome of its human resources. For Schultz (1987), human resource has to do with acquired abilities of human beings which are fostered through education and training. He (1980) stated that

> the decisive factors of production in improving the welfare of poor people are not space, energy, cropland; the decisive factor is the improvement in population quality. Mankind's future is not foreordained by space, energy and cropland. It will be determined by the intelligent evolution of humanity. (pp. 640-641)

Schultz's (1987) reference to "intelligent evolution of humanity" and "improvement in population quality" indicates the importance of the role of human beings in the achievement of a better life.

Griffin (1990) held similar views regarding human resource development and argued that people must be placed at the centre stage for achieving development goals. He stated that,

> the process of economic development is coming increasingly to be understood as a process of expanding the capabilities of people...Commodities and capabilities are, of course, linked -- but in the final analysis it is capabilities that matter and this is underlined by putting people first. (p. 11)

Soedjatmoko (1990) also felt that development could not be achieved without energizing people, especially those who live in a state of despair and deprivation.

The ideas of all advocates of human resource development convey the same basic notion that development does not occur by itself and that physical resources alone do not cause development automatically. What is needed are human talents, skills and knowledge. Therefore, from this perspective, human beings are the prime "motor" that generates power and activates the "engine" of development.

### Assumptions and Values

The major assumption underlying the perspective is that economic growth and human resource development are interlinked (Myers, 1967). Schultz (1980) stated that human capital was instrumental in raising productivity and that entrepreneurial ability essentially determined economic development. A number of economic considerations are embedded in these assumptions. According to LaBelle (1986), these neo-classical economic considerations include ideas such as the following: products and labor markets are competitive; firms strive for profit maximization; workers tend to maximize earnings; the labor force makes best utilization of available opportunities; labor markets are essentially homogeneous and salaries are determined by the supply and demand, and both employers and employees benefit from their investment and work.

Grounded in these considerations, assumptions of human resource development are identified with the value that development cannot be realized through an act of charity.

Instead there must be an emphasis on investing in people which has potential to yield a return to both individuals and society in the same way as financial and material investment (Griffin, 1990; Psacharopoulos, 1985). This value emanates from the recognition of the importance of human abilities, skills and knowledge in improving economic and social conditions. Advocates of this perspective accept the view that people's needs cannot be addressed only by physical and material support coming from outside. For example, providing hungry people with fish instead of the fishing rod tends to increase their dependency. The fundamental value of human resources development involves energizing people for self-improvement through education and training.

### Methodology

Different forms of educational activities serve as strategies for acquiring skills and knowledge necessary for the development of human resources. In reflecting on the diverse educational approaches to development, Harbison (1973) stated that

> perhaps most of man's development takes place routinely and often unconsciously through learning-by-doing, being instructed or inspired by others to perform specific tasks through association and communication with others or simply by participation in a community or in a working environment. (p. 5)

Implicit in this statement is the possibility that educational strategies can be organized formally, nonformally or informally. The purpose of each of these strategies, however, lies in unleashing human capabilities for higher levels of productivity. Various approaches such as on-the-job training, pre-service education and training, and extension or community approaches are consistent with the general perspective.

On-the-job education and training programs are provided to an already employed labor force to develop further knowledge and skills in order to enhance productivity. The purpose of pre-service education and training programs is to prepare people to enter the job market. Extension or community approaches emphasize the need for developing people's skill, knowledge and understanding in areas that transcend the world of work (Harbison, 1973). Both formal and nonformal frameworks may be used for conducting on-the-job, pre-service and community-centred learning activities. Nevertheless, the nonformal approach to helping people learn useful skills and knowledge in connection with addressing basic life needs is generally accepted as practical, relevant and promising.

Callaway (1973), reflecting on the importance of the nonformal approach to learning, noted that nonformal learning strategies have more strength because of the potential to be used as substitutes for an extension to the formal system or a distinct mode for imparting knowledge, skills and understandings which help to improve the effectiveness of the world of work. He added that weaknesses of the formal system, mainly in terms of cost and accessibility, increased the importance of the nonformal system which is basically goal-oriented, accessible, innovative, continuous and practical.

## Rural Development Perspective

Rural habitation is predominant in developing countries. According to Gunstilleke (1978), about two-thirds of the population of these countries live in rural areas but a Unesco report (1974) stated that this figure could be as high as 80 percent. The term "rural" signifies a lack of modernization characterized by rudimentary farming practices, illiteracy, poverty, ignorance, lack of communication and transportation, poor health and sanitation, unemployment, and subsistence living (Coombs, 1975). In order to counter these impediments, developing countries have adopted diverse strategies for rural transformation. One of the strategies is nonformal education.

### Philosophy

Generally, rural development is interpreted to mean improving the living standards of low-income people residing in rural areas (Lele, 1976). The concept of rural development seems to imply the need to bring about changes in the totality of rural life. Coombs (1975) provided an explicit definition when he stated that "rural development is a much more complex and long term process involving a fundamental transformation of rural societies -- socially, economically and politically". (p. 5) This comprehensive view of rural development embraces all major aspects of development associated with personal, family and community life (Coombs & Ahmed, 1975).

The comprehensive focus on rural development draws on such concepts as increasing agricultural productivity and the alleviation of poverty which recommends meeting the basic needs of the rural poor. It also directs attention to the importance of conducting various projects aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas through collaboration among internal and external agencies. A combination of these concerns serves to provide a broader framework for the process of rural development. Berstecher (1985) stated that "rural development would provide the centerpiece rather than the periphery of a nation's development strategy, and long-term rural transformation, not piecemeal improvement, would be the principal objective" (p. 31). In the context of developing countries, the need for rural development as the centerpiece of an overall strategy seems pertinent, because focusing on the improvement of extensive rural areas in developing countries with their diverse needs and problems creates a basis for national development. Some examples from Thailand and Nepal are relevant to the point.

Suthasupa (1987), while discussing the Thai context, favored placing high priority on meeting various rural development problems such as underemployment, poverty, over population, low productivity, poor health and sanitation as a strategy for national development. Similarly, a report from Nepal identified several rural development problems such as poverty, malnourishment, filth, ignorance, lack of new skills and facilities, problem of water, transportation and communication, the limited supply of arable land, environmental deterioration, social discrimination and oppression. The same report recommended that without combatting these impediments, national development would not be realized (Kasaju, Lamichhane & Pradhan, 1980). These two examples support the view that no real development will occur without rural development.

Assumptions and Values

Coombs and Ahmed (1975) summarized the multiple goals of rural development as follows:

> generation of employment opportunities; more equitable access to arable land; more equitable distribution of income; widespread improvement in health, nutrition and housing; greatly broadened opportunities for all individuals to realize their full potential through education; and a strong voice for all rural people in shaping the decisions and actions that affect their lives. (p. 13)

These goals are potentially attainable through the promotion and subsequent application of acquired abilities of rural people, acting either individually or collectively. In addition, better social and economic opportunities are dependent on rural people's participation in the administrative and operational aspects of existing rural development institutions. An effective role for rural people, which is assumed as being crucial for development, has to do with improving their skills, attitudes, and knowledge.

Unless such impeding factors as conformity, fatalism, dependency and self-degradation, and lack of knowledge and application of skills are replaced with a critical outlook, dignity, self-power, skill acquisition and an orientation toward active involvement, the goals of rural development will remain out of reach. For achieving these necessary ingredients of rural development by illiterate people, nonformal education is assumed to be a viable strategy. Motivating people to become involved in learning activities in the areas indicated above, acquiring relevant information and skills, examining what they can do with their newly acquired power, and generating resources for operationalizing the acquired power in real life situations is assumed to be a powerful force for rural development.

These assumptions are associated with numerous values. First of all, the rural development perspective on nonformal education involves not only changing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of illiterate people but also operationalizing the acquired abilities. Rural areas must be given priority in terms of expanding effective learning opportunities for illiterate people by allocating increased resources. Second, emphasis is placed on activating existing rural development agencies and other social and cultural institutions innovatively as well as creating new ones as necessary. These institutions must involve rural people in implementing developmental activities. An enabling partnership must evolve between local people and various institutions so as to identify and address priority needs and also to continue relevant rural development oriented educational efforts in a self-sustaining manner (Lele, 1976).

Rural development-oriented nonformal education program should address existing needs and problems in a given rural context, and must not be linked, directly or indirectly, to serve the needs of the modern urban sector (Berstecher, 1985). Even a slight deviation in the learning process from rural to urban context may lead the participants out of their reality to a different one in which rural empowerment in social, economic, political and cultural aspects may be overshadowed.

## Methodology

No controversy seems to exist over the point that learning activities have to address development needs and problems for a rural context. Addressing rural needs through problem-based learning programs is not questioned. Since rural development needs and problems are characteristically diverse, an integrated approach to dealing with them is required (Berstecher, 1985; UNESCO, 1980). An integrated rural development approach warrants multiple needs oriented learning programs. Coombs (1975) identified such needs as food, water, shelter, employment, better income, education, communication, health care, sanitation, hygiene and social harmony. Integrating all of these components into the nonformal adult education program has been emphasized.

Coombs and Ahmed (1974) identified four broader areas, which include the more specific components as stated above, for the nonformal adult education program. The categories are as follows: (a) general or basic education, (b) family improvement education,

(c) community improvement education, and (d) occupational education. Learning activities dealing with these areas require incorporation of relevant skills and knowledge. Furthermore, operationalizing acquired skills and knowledge constitutes another aspect of rural development oriented nonformal adult education programs. Concerning the operationalization part, Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973) expressed the view that educational inputs must interact with other complementary inputs so as to have a positive impact on rural development. Similarly, Coombs (1985) felt that an enabling interaction between outside help and participants' active and critical involvement must be stressed in order to ensure an effective nonformal adult education program for rural development.

Another important step towards a meaningful rural development-based nonformal adult education program would be to elicit organizational cooperation for material support as well as technical information. For this purpose, existing service delivery agencies have to be mobilized. Moreover, in situations where such agencies are non-existent or are few and far apart, a joint effort of the local people and of nongovernmental as well as governmental organizations to create new structures seems advisable. Prada (1978) suggested that in order to facilitate nonformal educational activities for rural development, restructuring educational institutions as community development centres and involving youth in establishing independent organizations for dealing with social, economic, cultural and political issues would be an appropriate move.

In general, an integrated approach to rural development through nonformal adult education has been emphasized as a viable methodology. In this connection, a Unesco report (1986) highlighted the integrated rural development approach as,

> a comprehensive change encompassing social, economic and cultural spheres involving all segments of community;
>
> encouraging change in all sectors and regions of the society at an even pace;
>
> meaningful linkages among diverse agencies, sectors and regions, requiring coordinated and concerted efforts at development; and

> active voluntary participation by the members of the community and the larger society. (p. 1)

The integration of various learning components in relationship with diverse needs of rural development, of outside assistance and of inside initiative, and of interaction between learning activities and input support with organizational involvement form the methodology of rural development.

## Discussion

As is evident from the above analysis, each of the four perspectives on nonformal adult education is characterized by distinct philosophical orientations accompanied by particular emphases, methodologies and desired outcomes. Table 3 provides a summary of the perspectives.

As is indicated in the Table, all four perspectives aim at enabling illiterate and unskilled people to become resourceful and competent in attacking the causes of their deprived state. The first two perspectives -- radical emancipatory and liberal emancipatory -- tend to uncover psychological forces in human beings that enable them to engage in a critical study of "self" and of the contradictions in the existing reality. Basic processes as well as emphases, however, differ from each other. The other two perspectives -- human resource development and rural development -- place emphasis on helping people to acquire skills, knowledge and techniques which are considered instrumental in addressing basic development needs and problems. In addition, the rural development perspective attaches importance to operationalizing acquired skills and techniques with the help of various agencies. In general, the emancipatory perspectives intervene primarily in the minds of people while in the development perspectives the acquisition and application of skills are emphasized with a focus on bringing about qualitative changes in the lives and the environment of people.

Considering the different nature of emancipatory and development perspectives, they could be contrasted in terms of some general characteristics. The emancipatory

Table 3
Summary of Nonformal Adult Education Perspectives

| Perspectives | Philosophical Orientations | Major Emphases | Methodologies | Desired Outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Radical emancipatory | Education as a political activity for liberation | Critical reflection of reality<br>Struggle against oppression<br>Transformation of the existing reality into the one where the oppressed emerge as activists for liberation | Conscientization of the oppressed through praxis<br>Political agitation through organized mass movement | Social struggle and conflict for structural change |
| Liberal emancipatory | Education for promoting self-ability and self-worth towards self-actualization<br>Promoting self-worth and ability towards self-actualization | Recognition of one's own ability and worth<br>Development of "self" as a means and end to human prosperity | Providing entitlements<br>Unconstrained and enabling learning where traditional constraints imposed on the teaching/learning process are discarded | Fostering capabilities<br>Individual transformation |
| Human resource development | Investment in education for human capital formation | Productivity raising<br>Training of productive skills | Pre-service or on-the-job training<br>Skill transmission through extension programs | Skill development for productivity and employment<br>National income (GNP) |
| Rural development | Education as a strategy for meeting rural development needs | Family improvement<br>Community improvement<br>Occupational growth | Development and operationalization of relevant skills, information and knowledge for meeting rural development needs<br>Positive interaction between needs and infrastructural facilities | Rural economic growth<br>Ruralization as opposed to urbanization of developing countries |

perspectives have a more humanistic orientation directed toward personal change as a prelude to structural transformation while the development perspectives have a goal geared more directly towards economic and infrastructural development (Bhola, 1989). Although the ultimate goal of achieving transformation is the same, there are major differences even between the two emancipatory perspectives with respect to philosophy, emphases, methodologies and desired outcomes. The radical perspective is heavily inclined in a revolutionary direction. Conscientization and political empowerment of oppressed people followed by their involvement in radical political agitation constitute the focal points of this perspective. The approach is considered to be the only effective instrument for changing an oppressive reality and for achieving structural transformation.

In contrast, the liberal perspective recognizes people as capable beings, who, if provided with opportunities for fostering their latent energies, become motivated to correct their adverse situations. Once the momentum for improvement of individuals' lives occurs, changes in their surroundings follow. This process itself becomes a facilitative force for social, economic, and political transformation as well as for cultural enrichment. In other words, structural transformation begins to occur. The radical perspective acknowledges structural transformation through the process of learning aimed at political empowerment of people which leads to a mass movement directed at change. The purpose inherent in this perspective makes learning instrumental for carrying out other objectives. In contrast, the liberal perspective attempts to unleash people's latent powers with the conviction that they serve as an end in themselves for change and development (Selman, 1987).

The differences between the radical and liberal perspectives are evident in two statements by two different authors. In relation to the radical perspective, Gajardo (1987) stated that

> popular and people's movement approaches to adult education today emphasize the capacity of specific social groups to bring about change. For such approaches change occurs essentially through groups or movements able to take initiatives and successfully to carry out new experiences. (p. 63)

On the other hand, Temple (quoted by Jennings, 1987) commented on the liberal perspective of adult education as "the disciplining of the judgement, the enlivening of the imagination and the widening of the sympathy -- in other words the cultivation of the powers which make us truly human" (p. 52).

The statement on the radical perspective acknowledges the importance of collective action as a means for change. It is oriented primarily towards changing the system through an organized movement. On the other hand, the liberal perspective places emphasis on individual empowerment as an end of change because, as Jennings (1987) stated, "the road of learning leads to a land of wisdom, that knowledge is power, that the education of citizens brings the solution of social problems" (p. 50). This idea indicates the person-centred nature of the approach to change.

According to Evans (1981), nonformal adult education may be discussed from system-centred and person-centred approaches. The system-centred approach relies on changing the system through a political movement while the person-centred approach places importance on the growth of people's intellectual capabilities and resourcefulness. Considering these approaches in relation to the emancipatory perspectives, the person-centred approach seems to be similar to the liberal perspective and the system-centred approach to the radical perspective. The former is associated with the evolutionary process of change while the latter with the revolutionary process.

Although the goal of both of these perspectives is to emancipate illiterate people from wretchedness, oppression and ignorance, they differ in emphases and strategies in such a way that they seem to exist in two different spheres.

Differences also exist between the human resource development and rural development approaches. Priority in human resource development is given to equipping people with various economically gainful skills that are expected to raise their level of productivity. This priority seems to be justified on the ground that underdevelopment is the consequence of a lack of productive skills among people. Providing people with such skills is assumed to increase their opportunities for employment.

The outcomes of learning in this perspective do not relate to enhancing human cognition or to critical perceptive ability and do not involve critical study of either "self" or "reality." The only factors recognized in this perspective involve skill acquisition and the application of those skills by the individual. No other processes of "self" growth and critical awareness are involved. Nevertheless, the perspective does stress the need for self-development through acquisition of skills. Only in this respect can the human resource development perspective be considered to be person-centred.

The rural development perspective, on the other hand, attempts not only to build basic social, cultural and economic skills and techniques but also to operationalize such skills in real life situations. In other words, rural development involves the transformation of rural institutions, processes and human relationships. Understood in this fashion, rural development is more than increasing economic productivity. Essentially, acquiring better health, hygiene and sanitary practices, becoming involved in the preservation of the environment, participating in occupational skills development programs, and participating in educating children are among the activities linked to social, economic, political and cultural aspects that define the scope of rural development.

The rural development perspective by the nature of its objectives, which are to build individuals' capabilities and also to involve them in conducting activities by reorienting, restructuring and mobilizing existing institutions or creating new ones, seems to be both person-centred and system-centred. Both the rural development and human resource development perspectives have potential to inspire positive changes in the lives of poor people. However, the former relies primarily on training while the latter also includes the operationalizing aspect. Although they differ in their methodological orientations, cognitively critical and reflective processes remain outside of the scope of the development perspectives.

## Summary

The general orientation of each of the four perspectives on nonformal adult education is inspired by the desire to alleviate the mental and material poverty of people. Emancipatory perspectives, which include both liberal and radical modalities, emphasize the need to promote the development of critical capacities and capabilities. The perspectives encompass different strategies for helping the poor to emerge from deprivation and oppression. Generally, both of the perspectives recognize the importance of penetrating into the psychological and cognitive levels of people in order to change them into capable human beings. The other two perspectives, human resource and rural development, are oriented toward equipping people with relevant basic-needs responsive skills and involving them in applying such skills with concurrent infrastructure and material support. To achieve this purpose, emphasis is placed on skill training activities as well as on implementing projects designed to apply acquired skills in real life situations.

# CHAPTER 4

# NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN BANGLADESH

The Bangladesh experience offers a perspective on a number of different approaches to addressing fundamental social and economic problems through nonformal adult education programs. In this chapter, the experience is described in terms of four major themes. First, the general context that defines both the needs and constraints is outlined. This is followed by an overview of nonformal adult education initiatives. The third section comprises the main part of the case study. Specifically, four main types of nonformal adult education programs -- literacy, human resource development, promoting critical awareness, and rural development -- are described. The fourth section includes an analysis of the achievements, challenges and implications of efforts in Bangladesh to develop nonformal adult education programs. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

## Social, Economic and Political Context

Bangladesh is situated at the Eastern end of the Indo-Gangetic plain in South Asia. The country shares a common border with Burma on the East, India on the West and North and faces the Bay of Bengal in the South. Within a land area of 142,776 square kilometres (Kurian, 1987), Bangladesh has one of the world's most complex river systems. Rivers in Bangladesh are a great natural asset in terms of providing cheap and convenient transportation as well as furnishing vast supplies of fish; however, they also inflict serious damage on human life and property in times of flood. Bangladesh has a tropical climate governed by the monsoons. A hot summer is usually followed by a cool dry winter.

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country following the liberation war with Pakistan in 1971. The constitution of 1972 introduced parliamentary democracy (Kurian, 1987); however, the government has taken the form of a series of military regimes. Conflict among various power groups has caused political instability in the country. Gosh

(1990) indicated that continuing political instability coupled with natural disasters has ravaged Bangladesh's economy and jeopardized development plans that include the education sector. According to Gosh (1990), the solution to Bangladesh's web of problems resides in the power of people -- solutions must focus on their intellectual, economic, social, psychological, and perceptual development.

Bangladesh ranks about eighth in the world in terms of size of population. The 100 million mark was passed in 1985 (Kurian, 1987). With a growth rate of 2.2 percent, the population of Bangladesh is expected to reach 128 million by the year 2000. The ratio of male to female population is about 106.4 males per 100 females (Kurian, 1987). The majority of the people live in over 71,000 villages. In terms of religion, Bangladesh stands as the second largest Islamic country in the world; about 90 percent of the people observe the Islamic faith (Kurian, 1987). The continuing trend of a population "explosion" is contributing to a pupil "explosion." An ever increasing number of children is increasing the demand for education. The formal system of education faces a major challenge to provide adequate educational opportunities.

Agriculture is the main basis of the economy. About 74 percent of the total population is engaged in agriculture (Kurian, 1987). Bangladesh lacks natural resources which have potential for economic development, and is one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite attempts to emphasize a free market economy, the public sector remains dominant. A significant discrepancy in income distribution has widened the gap between the poor and the rich. About 6.9 percent of national income was received by the bottom 20 percent of the people whereas 27.4 percent was enjoyed by the top 10 percent (Kurian, 1987).

An appalling level of poverty among a majority of the people has forced them to give primary attention to meeting survival needs. Children are not likely to acquire a formal school education and eventually become illiterate adults. Consequently, not much of the productive potential of the reservoir of human resources in Bangladesh is realized. In order to change this reality, massive efforts to expand nonformal adult education programs would seem to be required. Carceles (1990) indicated that, despite provision of free and compulsory primary education, the literacy rate of Bangladesh stands at 33 percent. The magnitude of the problem results from socio-economic obstacles, lack of accessibility, and inability of schools to retain their students. As a result, illiteracy is on the increase.

## Overview of Nonformal Education Initiatives

Bangladesh first introduced nonformal adult education in the form of the literacy program of 1940 which was implemented in the district of Sylhet. Financial constraints and organizational deficiencies created problems for this program. Subsequently, the government took a new initiative by conducting functional literacy projects in some rural administrative units (Thanas) in 1964. A number of important areas such as agriculture, cooperatives, family planning and public health were included to make the literacy program work-oriented (Hossain, 1982). As a result of the implementation of this project, numerous literacy centres were established. During the period from 1964 to 1979, a total of 139,763 adults gained literacy skills and related knowledge (Hossain 1982). This project was effective in addressing the illiteracy problem.

The extent of illiteracy prompted the government to give this problem high priority. Consequently, a crash program on mass literacy was launched during the period from January 1980 to June 1980 with the objective of enrolling 10 million illiterates, developing and distributing literacy primers free of cost, preparing two squads of literacy tutors consisting of three to five members for each village and building an organizational structure from the central to the grassroots levels.

The outcomes of this crash program were encouraging considering that 150,000 literacy squads were trained and mobilized and that literacy primers were distributed to participants (Hossain, 1982). Subsequently, the government developed another mass education program which was conducted during the second five year plan from 1980 to

1985. This time, however, the government felt that a literacy program had to take into account such areas as agriculture, health, family planning, cooperatives, environmental problems and civic participation in order to enable participants to face economic, social, educational and other challenges in life. As a result, the emphasis was placed on promoting functional literacy.

In addition to an increasing focus on functional literacy, steps were taken to orient nonformal adult education towards meeting rural development needs. For this purpose, rural development activities with an emphasis on extension services and cooperative programs were undertaken. The initiative provided a new dimension and momentum to the nonformal adult education programs. In general, the force to address the problem of illiteracy and to empower the illiterate poor was generated by both government and nongovernment organizations.

Although both the government and nongovernment sectors were involved in adult education, the government sector, especially the Ministry of Education, took the initiative in designing and implementing nonformal adult education programs. Over the course of time, various modifications and changes were made in the programs as the diverse needs and problems of development of the rural poor came to be better understood. A significant change occurred when nonformal adult education programs were made a responsibility not only of the Ministry of Education but also of several other ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, the Ministry of Broadcasting and Information, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. All of these ministries became involved in conducting activities related to areas within their jurisdictions with the general intent of skill formation among the target groups. Various government ministries mobilized their resources to assist the poor directly in addition to fulfilling their administrative responsibilities (Committee on Nonformal Education, 1975).

Contributions from nongovernment organizations to further the scope of nonformal adult education in Bangladesh were significant. Most of these organizations were established after the liberation of the country in 1971. According to the Agricultural Development Agency of Bangladesh (quoted by Khan & Bhasin, 1986), about 10 percent of the total population was served by nongovernmental organizations. Khan and Bhasin (1986) identified three types of nongovernment organizations in Bangladesh. The first type included *target oriented* groups which involved themselves in implementing economic programs with the assistance of service delivery agencies. The second type was the *conscientization* group which stressed emancipating poor people from oppression while the third type was composed of foreign nongovernment organizations which prioritized *community development* activities similar to those undertaken by the government agencies.

Although Bangladesh was in the advantageous position of having the support of diverse nongovernment organizations, those oriented mainly to the philosophy of conscientization were actively emerging, specifically with the support of local intellectuals and international nongovernment organizations. As Ahmad (1985) stated, nongovernment organizations inclined towards this philosophy increased in number and involved a large number of rural landless people.

Nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh spread in both government and nongovernment sectors. Social, economic, literacy and other human development activities were implemented. One noteworthy achievement was the reduction of the illiteracy rate. According to Unesco Statistical Yearbook (1979), the illiteracy rate in Bangladesh was 77 percent in 1977-1978. This rate fell to 70.8 percent in 1981 and to 66.9 in 1985 respectively (Carceles, 1990). But the educational system lacks efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance. This situation continues to produce increasing numbers of illiterate adults. In order to provide illiterates with appropriate learning opportunities and a basis for development, a continued emphasis on nonformal adult education is necessary.

## Nature of Nonformal Adult Education Programs

Nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh have focused generally on goals aimed at empowering illiterate, disadvantaged and marginalized people with a view to improving the quality of their lives. Although these programs had fairly homogeneous goals, they varied in nature. Usually, the selection of a specific nonformal adult education program depended on the decision of the program sponsor. In this section four main types of nonformal adult education programs -- literacy, human resource development, critical awareness, and rural development -- are described with special reference to program sponsors, target groups, structural arrangements, resources and personnel management, types of material used and methodology employed.

### Literacy Programs

The acquisition of literacy skills and knowledge oriented to promoting agriculture, cooperatives, family planning and public health have been emphasized in Bangladesh. As Hossain (1982) indicated, Bangladesh has been engaged in expanding work-oriented literacy programs for a period of over five decades. Basically, illiterate adult males and females living in rural areas and urban slums, who form the majority of the population, have been the main target groups of the programs. The objectives are two-fold: to increase the number of participants in literacy programs and to improve the quality of their lives.

In order to carry out the literacy programs on a national scale, the Ministry of Education developed guidelines and policies with a view to facilitating implementation by the Directorate of Mass Education and other subordinate offices. Although the Directorate of Mass Education was entrusted with actual implementation, the District Education Offices were given the responsibility to train facilitators as well as to supervise and evaluate the programs. In addition, a District Mass Education Committee was established with representatives from various interest groups, including administrative and educational authorities, to assess the progress of implementation and to suggest measures for qualitative and quantitative improvement.

The mass literacy programs were carried out from 1964 to 1979 with both government and local resources. All potential sources of support were mobilized to meet the immense resource needs. The government assumed all financial responsibility for administration and for preparing and distributing learning materials. In most instances, the local communities provided space for conducting learning activities. Teachers worked without remuneration. Secondary school students were involved as facilitators. In this way, the required human and material resources were mobilized. The mass media, including television, radio and newspapers, were widely used to promote people's awareness of the mass literacy program. Similarly, activities such as dramas, folk songs, feature films and advertisements were used to raise and maintain participant motivation.

In order to ensure effective implementation of the programs, the Department of Education developed literacy primers and teachers' guides, and also carried out teacher training and evaluation activities. Attention was given to establishing coordination among various government ministries with a view to soliciting their cooperation in implementing the programs. Moreover, private organizations were also asked to assist. At the local level, municipalities and other government authorities were involved in identifying prospective participants, recruiting teachers and distributing learning materials.

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and other government bodies played a leading role in conducting the literacy programs (Committee on Nonformal Education, 1975). Their involvement was justified on the grounds that the purpose of the mass literacy programs was to prepare a citizenry with the ability to read and write, the ability to be aware of and participate in government plans and programs, and the ability to act according to the direction of the government. In other words, the programs were launched with a focus on promoting participants' resourcefulness as deemed essential by the government. However, there were additional nonformal education activities which addressed human resource development through economic and health skills training.

## Human Resource Development

As has been mentioned, Bangladesh has a vast reservoir of human resources. Unfortunately, due to lack of skill formation and the development of technical abilities through appropriate education and training, this reservoir of human resources has drained rather than contributed to the economy. Consequently, a vast majority of people -- over four-fifths of the population -- survive in absolute poverty (Ahmad, 1986; Khan & Bhasin, 1986). In recognition of the need to increase productivity, both government and nongovernment organizations took initiatives to promote educational opportunities, health care skills, productive skill training and family planning measures.

Nonformal education programs, based on a human resource development philosophy, focused specifically on poor, marginalized, landless, oppressed and illiterate adults. Both government and nongovernment organizations emphasized the importance of having these people participate in the programs. On the government side, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the Ministry of Health as well as other government agencies played a major role (Committee on Nonformal Education, 1975). Similarly, a number of nongovernment organizations, including the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, the People's Health Centre (Ganoshasthya Kendra), and the People's Centre (Ganomilan Kendra), conducted nonformal education programs for disadvantaged people with an emphasis on human resource development (Setti, 1989; Harrison & Saul 1983; Nonformal Education Committee, 1975).

The structural arrangement used for the operation of human resource development focused nonformal education programs varied with types of organizations involved. Programs sponsored by government organizations were implemented by involving various units operating at different levels of the organizational hierarchy. Nongovernment organizations, on the other hand, emphasized decentralization and gave more attention to strengthening local level activities. Although these organizations also operated along a hierarchy, they did so with minimum bureaucracy.

In the structure of the People's Health Centre, there were several departments with specific responsibilities for each project. Each department consisted of divisions or sections that were connected with program operation centres and subcentres at the field level. The entire hierarchy above the field level was oriented to the effectiveness of this level (Haque, 1990). A fair degree of similarity was evident between the basic structure and design of government and nongovernment organizations. However, at the operational level, nongovernment organizations demonstrated greater efficiency than the government organizations because of their emphasis on less bureaucracy and more autonomy.

To meet the personnel and financial requirements of the government programs, the state mobilized its own personnel structure and allocated its own financial resources. In addition, people were asked to contribute to the operation of programs in whatever way they could. The nongovernment organizations, on the other hand, depended on donations from within and outside of the country. They also developed various resource generating schemes and entrepreneurial activities. For instance, the People's Health Centre introduced an insurance scheme that involved all program participants. Those who were better off economically paid relatively more (Haque, 1990). Similarly, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee operated two commercial enterprises -- a printing house and a cold storage and ice plant -- which generated substantial proceeds for financing programs (Setti, 1989).

Nonformal education programs with a focus on human resource development fostered social, educational, economic as well as health and family planning knowledge and skills. Various types of instructional materials concerning these areas, especially relating to skill learning, were developed and distributed. The materials appeared in varied forms such as posters, pamphlets, primers and training manuals. The government organizations tended to produce teaching materials whereas nongovernment organizations tended to develop analytical and creative materials especially posters and flip-charts depicting social problems and challenges. Distribution of materials to the participants was emphasized in order to reinforce their literacy skills and knowledge, and to keep them involved in reflecting on and analyzing their present condition while they planned for the future. Various skill learning activities were also conducted through training programs. The government organizations identified training areas for the programs that they sponsored while the nongovernment organizations consulted potential participants to identify their training needs. Setti (1989) reported that the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee developed skill training programs based on dialogue with the prospective participants. Organization of groups and operation of activities were supervised by the facilitators or trainers. Mainly the government sponsored nonformal education programs placed emphasis on human resource development through imparting economic and social skills to the participants. Generally, these programs failed to address adequately psychologically important factors such as respect for human dignity, self-worth and self-esteem. Nongovernment organizations addressed this need by introducing conscientization-based nonformal education programs (Ahmad, 1985).

### Development of Critical Awareness

Empowerment of deprived and disadvantaged groups of people through raising their level of critical awareness has formed an important component of nonformal education in Bangladesh. Predominantly, nongovernment organizations became involved in this type of nonformal education program. According to Ahmad (1985), nongovernment organizations attempted to help the poorest section of the population by placing emphasis on raising their critical, analytical and creative capabilities. Those organizations emphasized the development of human beings through energizing their productive potential. An example of human development through the promotion of critical awareness and mass organization of disadvantaged people was provided by the Nijera Kori (self-help) organization.

Nijera Kori was founded in order to help famine-stricken women who were migrating to the city near the end of 1974. A humanitarian initiative by a Norwegian donor provided these women opportunities to engage in productive activities. Later, as the program expanded, more financing was required; financial contributions from foreign donor agencies were solicited to meet this need. In order to acquire foreign grants, it was necessary to have a legally registered organization; consequently, Nijera Kori was formally registered in 1980. Although Nijera Kori was able to continue activities with assistance from outside agencies, voluntary services were provided by facilitators and organizers at the field level. Ahmad (1985) reported that the highest proportion of facilitators declined to receive any financial support for their services. Local people also added their contributions in whatever way they could in order to reward Nijera Kori's programs.

In recognition of the oppression of women by the prevailing social, political and economic system, Nijera Kori initially emphasized organizing women for liberation through "conscientization." Later, it was recognized that men too suffered injustices. Therefore, in order to enable men to strive toward emancipation they were also included in the program. In general, Nijera Kori sought to empower those who occupied the bottom rung of the social ladder. Moreover, this organization helped marginalized people realize their self-worth and dignity and subsequently involved them in transforming their appalling condition to a more humane existence (Ahmad, 1985).

The organization and operation of Nijera Kori's consciousness raising activities were performed in three different areas. The primary operational unit was the Thana -- a local administrative unit. Representatives from different Thanas formed a coordination committee which was responsible for policy decisions and field operations in each area. Above this tier, there were regional coordination committees. The entire field operation was divided into four geographical regions each of which had a coordinating committee composed of representatives from Thana committees. At the top was the central executive committee with similar representation from regional committees. Although this structure appeared to be hierarchical and bureaucratic, it functioned democratically in the sense that representatives from lower level committees were elected to work in the higher level committees. A ready flow of communication between and among different committees, an absence of administrative hierarchy and autonomy in making policy decisions even at the local level were some unique features of Nijera Kori (Ahmad, 1985).

Since Nijera Kori emphasized the need for arousing participants' consciousness of their circumstances and organizing themselves to strive for more humane living conditions, a variety of materials was used for enlivening the learning activities. Specifically, visual aids depicting contradictions existing in the socio-economic structure were used to stimulate discussions. Drama and puppet shows which highlighted various exploitative processes in the society were staged. Musical programs which contained tragic stories as a result of oppression by the dominant class were organized, and indigenous cultural practices were used to a great extent for conscientization purposes. Incidentally, today, the use of cultural activities to raise the critical, analytical and creative capabilities of oppressed people is generally recognized. For example, Kidd (1985) highlighted the use of indigenous cultural capital, particularly popular theatre, in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Program activities at the local level were implemented by group leaders, facilitators and organizers who were selected by the group members from among themselves. Training which focused on the program objectives was provided to group members and organizers. Discussion forums formed the main method of training. Participants were involved in making critical analyses of their living conditions and of their surrounding environment as well as identifying possibilities for improvement. In order to help them carry out this activity, they were provided with a predesigned training module. Mobile cultural teams were formed to present drama and puppet shows. In essence, the entire approach of Nijera Kori was directed towards expanding the oppressed people's organizational capabilities by arousing their critical perceptual awareness. As Ahmad (1985) stated, group organizers and group leaders were actively involved in helping participants to identify solutions for their appalling living conditions through critical discussion and dialogue in an educative process.

In general, the organization of people in order to enable them to take actions to better their lives constituted an important part of the nonformal adult education program in Bangladesh. Moreover, emphasis was also placed on rural development oriented nonformal education programs. Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed (1973) defined rural development as transformation geared towards culminating in change not only in economic institutions and methods of production but also in social and political infrastructures and in human relationships.

### Rural Development Programs

An integrated approach to rural development has also been given high priority by the government since the early 1960s. Rural development activities that focused on the learning of various skills and subsequent material support for their implementation were developed and provided for landless farmers, laborers and other oppressed groups. The number of participants in different areas varied according to the specific targets of different projects.

In general, the approach emphasized providing training and extension services to participants. Group leaders were identified and trained with a view to organizing and operating cooperatives and extension services. These group leaders, in turn, trained field workers who then involved people in learning various agricultural and cooperative management skills. Similarly, health workers were trained to provide primary health care services. Social welfare services that focused on nonformal education, employment, and income generating activities formed other important components of the integrated rural development approach (Qadir & Balaghatulla, 1985). The efforts were aimed at transforming the operational mode of development structures in order to help develop the rural areas.

Most of the rural development projects were managed and controlled by government organizations. An emphasis was placed on establishing and maintaining coordination among all government agencies involved in rural development projects. Depending upon a program's unique and innovative features, attention was given to designing either a new structural arrangement or to revamping the existing one. For example, most of the rural development projects carried out by the government created new structures for research, evaluation and training purposes. A number of new structures were created and some existing ones modified in an effort to fulfill the development needs of rural people (Committee on Nonformal Education, 1975).

The financial and human resource requirements for the implementation of rural development-oriented nonformal education programs were met largely by using both internal and external assistance. Personnel required for the operation of extension services and cooperative organizations were available at the field level. Financial assistance came from both the government and foreign donor agencies such as the Ford Foundation, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, and the United Nations Children Fund.

The operational strategy of rural development-oriented nonformal education program included a number of steps such as identifying needs, developing programs based on those needs, recruiting and training personnel, designing and developing learning materials, carrying out educational and training activities through organization of group discussions, disseminating information and relevant messages, and monitoring, supervising, and evaluating of program activities.

## Discussion

Different types of nonformal adult education in Bangladesh have been operated for more than five decades. Numerous government and nongovernment organizations have played significant roles in these programs. During this period various quantitative and qualitative improvements have been made in strategies for learning. Despite some accomplishments, there were also some problems. An examination of the Bangladesh experience may provide some general implications for developing relevant nonformal adult education programs.

### Accomplishments

Nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh accomplished various important objectives. Primarily, the needs of the disadvantaged sector of the society, represented by the landless and marginalized poor people, were addressed through programs that were directed toward empowering them to achieve a more humane existence. Literacy, skill training and consciousness raising activities geared to fostering participants' potential to be self-reliant and to live a life with dignity were emphasized. Each specific activity drew on a particular type of nonformal education program. Conscientization-based nonformal education programs advocated raising critical and analytical thinking capabilities of participants and also the need to organize for the struggle against oppression. Nonformal education programs based on the human resource development approach stressed economically productive skills while rural development oriented nonformal education programs tended to focus on activating the participants to become informed about and to mobilize existing service delivery structures in rural areas or to create new ones. Similarly, literacy oriented nonformal education programs tended to provide communication skills together with knowledge about various important areas such as agriculture, health care, family planning, cooperatives and preservation of environment.

The initiation and operation of nonformal adult education programs was carried out by various government and nongovernment organizations. In most cases, a need for coordination subsequently led to improved coordination among various organizations. This was a significant advance in the development of nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh.

Resource needs for the implementation of programs were met through mobilizing available material and human resources on the project site. Generally, participants contributed voluntary labor to help construct program operation centres, provided maintenance services and transported project materials. Such participation indicates readiness on the part of poor people to contribute to activities designed to improve their living conditions. Emergence of concern about current conditions among poor people and development of hope for a better life might be regarded as a significant outcome of nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh. In addition to mobilizing available resources, there was success in obtaining support from international agencies. A country like Bangladesh could not possibly depend entirely on internal resources. Many international donor agencies provided financial and material support. These contributions proved to be significant in the expansion of nonformal education programs.

Another important accomplishment was the development and use of a variety of learning materials. The purpose behind materials development was to motivate participants and to arouse interest in learning activities, to involve them in discussions, to share experiences, and eventually to apply the learning. In addition to the different teaching materials which were developed in the form of flip-charts, posters and pamphlets, other means of learning based on indigenous cultural activities such as drama, folklore and puppet shows were used increasingly. Innovative use of a variety of learning materials contributed to achieving effective outcomes from the learning activities.

An additional important accomplishment was the focus on diverse operational strategies. The tradition of transmitting information through one way communication by tutors was de-emphasized. Increasing attention was given to participant-centred approaches such as group discussion, dialogue, demonstration and practical learning experiences. The purpose was to enable participants to express their ideas, experiences and plans. The introduction of innovative strategies designed to create enabling power within the participants was a noteworthy strength of the programs.

Various accomplishments, as stated above, helped to shape nonformal education programs in line with existing needs, realities and problems of the illiterate poor. However, there were also some problems in the approaches.

## Challenges

A number of different types of challenges influenced nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh. The most noticeable one was compartmentalization of programs and inflexibility in the program focus. For example, government organizations concentrated mainly on literacy, human resource development and rural development aspects, and gave little attention to the need for consciousness raising. On the other hand, most nongovernment organizations emphasized conscientization and gave little importance to other practical activities. Essentially, various organizations involved in the design and operation of nonformal education programs lacked a pragmatic approach in the sense that they left out combining different components of learning that are oriented to address basic and real needs of participants. As a result, the full potential of nonformal education programs was not realized.

Another factor inhibiting growth and strength of nonformal education programs was the parallel nature of activities across various sponsors. Although an emphasis was placed on coordination, this was a continuing challenge. Since personnel in different organizations focused on meeting the goals of their respective organizations, they seldom engaged in exchange and mutual help activities with the result that the effectiveness of coordination was reduced. Rivalry among organizations hampered interorganizational coordination and cooperation. In general, the promise that nongovernment organizations could be a real force for the development of poor people was realized only to a limited degree because of frequent unproductive competition.

Another major challenge was that of giving more attention to the sponsors' philosophy and less to giving real priority to helping the poor. For example, government organizations tended to design and implement nonformal education programs in accordance with priorities which they determined. Participants were told to understand and accept what the government organizations offered them. Implicit in this action by the government was the motive of socializing the target groups along particular lines. On the other hand, nongovernment organizations supported participants' resistance against the existing power structures and tended to radicalize the poor. This philosophical tug-of-war between government and nongovernment organizations was not in the best interest of the people. Achieving a genuine commitment to striving for an overall development of poor people was an elusive outcome of the total effort (Bhasin & Malik, 1985).

Infiltration by the elites and vested interest groups who wished to redirect nonformal education program activities in particular ways was a major problem. This situation reduced the benefits that participants derived from the programs. On occasion, confrontation occurred between vested interest groups and the participants. In addition, there were persistent problems related to program evaluation, resource allocation and program continuity.

Considering both the accomplishments and the continuing challenges associated with different types of programs, various implications can be drawn for the development of frameworks for nonformal adult education.

## Implications

A compartmentalized focus on individual types of nonformal adult education is not likely to address all essential needs of human development. A truly development-oriented nonformal adult education program might be developed by drawing on the strengths of different types of programs. The conscientization approach seems essential for unleashing innate forces lying within oppressed people. Such forces are likely to help people overcome their inhibiting psychological conditions characterized by timidity, reticence, naivety, submissiveness, lack of confidence and lack of awareness of their ability, self-worth and dignity. Removing or reducing blocking factors that are deep-rooted in the psychology of oppressed people seems necessary in order to arouse their initiative to make efforts to improve their socio-economic condition.

Although there is a readiness on the part of oppressed people to engage in productive activities, they must first acquire social, economic and technical skills for which nonformal education with a human resource focus assumes major significance. For the application of these skills, participants should become actively involved in mobilizing service delivery agencies in rural areas or in creating new structures. The rural development component of nonformal education programs becomes relevant at this stage. Nonformal education programs that have the objective of attacking rural poverty should include practically useful elements of all types in order to help set in process a self-evolving human development.

A decision on the particular type of nonformal education program warrants early attention. Depending on participants' immediate needs and on surrounding environmental problems, a particular type of nonformal education program may be more appropriate than others. For instance, in a situation where participants' survival problem is critical, the relevance of a conscientization approach seems problematic. A situation of this nature demands a particular program which takes into account the immediate problem. Reflecting on Bangladesh's situation, Ahmad (1985) stated that

> it seems to be utopian to induce the zeal of organization among the starving people unless they are ensured of a square meal. It is equally utopian to talk about complete liberation from the clutches of exploitation if the people are stuck in mere economism. (p. 4)

This statement calls for nonformal education planners to internalize the reality of the participants and to decide in consultation with them what needs are to be given priority through a nonformal education program. Flexibility which ensures congruence with the existing situation must be present in order to make nonformal education programs truly development-oriented.

Results of efforts on the part of Bangladesh to address the problem of human development have important implications for nonformal education. Similar efforts will be required in other contexts to address future needs. A major lesson relates to the importance of collaborative efforts by both government and nongovernment organizations and accommodations on their part to develop a more integrated approach to nonformal education.

## Summary

The need for nonformal adult education in Bangladesh is determined primarily by the demographic and economic circumstances of the country. An additional factor is the inability of the formal system of education to fulfill the need. Government initiated nonformal adult education programs have a history of more than fifty years; significant contributions have also been made by nongovernment agencies. The major thrusts reflect four goals of nonformal adult education: to develop literacy, to develop human resources, to arouse consciousness, and to develop rural areas. Within each of these types of programs, a variety of structures and processes have been used. Among the major accomplishments, reduction in illiteracy has been a particularly significant one. The limited success in achieving effective coordination and in assessing needs from the perspective of target groups suggests possibilities for improving efforts in similar contexts.

# CHAPTER 5

# THE TANZANIAN EXPERIENCE WITH NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

Tanzania was the first African country to launch a nonformal adult education campaign. The values of *socialism and self-reliance* permeated the campaign which sought to reduce the levels of ignorance, hunger and disease among the illiterate poor. Various program activities were adopted to work toward these ends. An adult learning program was designed, encompassing ideas from conscientization, human resource development and rural development approaches. This chapter presents an analysis of the programs in terms of the historical context, philosophical basis, and administrative arrangement. A discussion on accomplishments and challenges is provided followed by implications for similar initiatives in other settings.

## Social, Economic and Political Context

Tanzania lies in East Africa. It has an area of 939,361 square kilometres and shares borders with eight other countries. Tanzania has a tropical equatorial climate; however, differences in altitude contribute to variations in climate across regions of the country. The population in Tanzania was estimated at 21 million in 1985 according to the 1978 official census. With an annual growth rate of 3.4 percent (World Bank, 1989), the population is expected to reach 37.3 million by the year 2000. The majority of the people understand and speak *Swahili,* which is the official language and lingua franca of Tanzania (Kurian, 1987).

The increasing rate of population growth will have a dramatic impact on education. An anticipated increase in the demand for education will make it necessary to expand learning opportunities. The potential of the formal system to cater for ever increasing educational demand is fairly limited, since the system is characterized by a lack of relevance, low enrollments and poor retention rates. Consequently, the nonformal approach to learning is likely to assume even greater significance in the future.

On the political side, Tanzania has a one party system; Cha Ma Chi Mapinduji (CCM), the only legally approved party, was formed by merging the Tanganyka African National Union (TANU) and the Afro-Shirazi Party. The party adopted principles of socialism characterized by mutual help, self-reliance, use of local resources, deemphasis on foreign aid, an *Ujjama* (familyhood or brotherhood in Swahili) philosophy, common ownership and sharing, popular participation in the process of nation building, removal of all distinctions based on class, wealth and status, and identification of the people as the controllers of all major sources of wealth and production (Kurian, 1987).

Economically, Tanzania is one of the low-income countries of the world. Adverse economic conditions continue to affect the lives of the people. Tanzania has a free market economy dominated by the public sector (Kurian, 1987). Per capita income in 1987 was 180 US dollars (World Bank, 1989). Nearly, 60 percent of the labor force is unskilled and 34 percent is semi-skilled. Agriculture engages 83 percent of the population; the rest is employed by the industrial and the service sectors (Kurian, 1987). In recognition of education's role in economic development, after independence Tanzania made a significant move in the expansion and improvement of education.

Tanzania had limited educational programs under colonial rule. Whatever programs there were, had little to do with the nation's needs. Instead, the intent was to produce some trained personnel in order to serve the colonial administrative and political structures. Screening process and an emphasis on merit characterized the educational program (Kurian, 1988). The situation continued to prevail even after independence. Lack of relevance of learning reduced the learners' motivation resulting in a high dropout rate, low retention and high number of failures.

Economic poverty is not the only attribute of poverty in an impoverished country. Poverty in perception, attitude, mentality, and productivity also account for impoverishment in life. Tanzania was well aware of these characteristics prevalent in its populace and strove to counter them by launching a nonformal adult education campaign.

## Historical Context

The history of nonformal adult education in Tanzania includes three important phases: the pre-colonial phase, the colonial phase and the post-colonial phase. The program framework in each phase has been influenced by cultural, social, and economic priorities determined by the state (Kalinjuma, 1990). The pre-colonial society in Tanzania had a traditional system of learning, characterized by living and doing. Senior members of the family transferred their knowledge and skills to their children usually by informal or nonformal means so that they could carry on the family tradition for their survival. This indigenous system of learning helped to continue a traditional life style rather than achieve the amenities of modern development (Mushi, 1990). Learning in the traditional system was aimed at achieving collective benefit and was not based on a system of social stratification (Mlekwa, 1990).

If the indigenous system of learning was free from the discriminatory characteristics of modern education, it was, at the same time, devoid of the advantages of modern knowledge, techniques of production, exchange and organization. As Nyerere (Quoted by Mushi, 1990) stated:

> We cannot go back to exclusive dependence on the traditional system of what I previously called learning by living and doing. We cannot go back because modern knowledge is not dispersed in our societies...and the techniques of modern production, exchange and organization were unknown in traditional Africa; they are still unknown to the majority of our adults. Learning just by living and doing in the existing society would leave us so backward socially and technologically that human liberation in the foreseeable future is out of question. (p.67)

The colonial system reduced the prospects for people to develop modern education. Although the colonialists gave some attention to educating people, the intent of education was to make the native people subservient to the colonial regime. The adult education program was no exception. Until independence, adult education programs in Tanzania were organized by Christian missionaries with support from the colonial government. The colonial government trusted the missionaries because the programs that were implemented socialized people in desired ways. In addition, the opportunity was meaningful to the missionaries in terms of their Christianizing goals. In general, adult education programs during the colonial regime were channeled to fulfilling political and religious objectives, primarily, with the intent of strengthening the colonial administration (Kalinjuma, 1990).

Regarding the learning programs, they were structured to create social stratification by screening the participants as brightest, average and below average. The focus of learning varied according to these categories. For example, the brightest were taught literacy, the average were provided with skilled trades and the below average were involved in manual work (Mlekwa, 1990). In essence, as Mpogolo (1980) stated "the type of education (which also includes adult education) offered during the colonial era was paternalistic...elitist in nature and exploitative in result...neither intended for human development nor the total liberation of man" (p. 9).

Adult education activities during the colonial period were oriented toward serving political and economic interests rather than improving the lot of deprived people. Essentially, adult education programs were part of a state apparatus through which people were treated as objects rather as subjects to be empowered (Mlekwa, 1990).

National independence brought about a turning point in the nature of the adult education programs. The post-colonial era focused on improving adult education qualitatively and quantitatively. The first step in this direction was to establish the Ministry of Community Development and National Culture which became involved in the collection of statistical data on literacy. This step was followed by the establishment of another structure, the Ministry of Regional Administration and Rural Development, which was involved in conducting adult education programs consisting of literacy training, women's development and self-help projects (Kalinjuma, 1990).

These initiatives helped to streamline national policy and program objectives, organizational structures, operational methods, financial provisions, development and production of learning materials, and research and innovation. Problems in these areas existed throughout the economically backward countries which were trying to combat illiteracy and to improve the quality of life among the masses. As a result of considering the need for designing a suitable nonformal adult education framework, the 1965 Unesco conference in Teheran recommended launching an Experimental World Literacy Program. Tanzania was among the first nine countries selected for the operation of this program (Kalinjuma, 1990). The program was conducted before the declaration of the literacy campaign in 1970.

## The Philosophy of Nonformal Adult Education

Following independence, Tanzania emphasized a political philosophy of *socialism and self-reliance* (Nyerere, 1967). This philosophy was founded on such principles as absence of exploitation, control of the major means of production and exchange by the peasants and workers, existence of democracy, development of practical skills, and regard for the dignity of labor. Consequently, the state shaped its educational philosophy along these principles (Mmari, 1979). Furthermore, Nyerere (1988) highlighted the educational philosophy as a means of liberating people from such constraints as ignorance and dependency and, indeed, promoting people's mental and physical freedom so that they could make rational judgements regarding their lives and environment. The focus of this philosophy was to create a society where, as Mmari (1979) stated, "dignity of labor was upheld, where practical skills were available with which to exploit natural resources for the benefit of mankind, where inquiring minds were encouraged through which to solve men's problems for the benefit of all" (p. 205).

The educational philosophy of Tanzania included three major elements: awareness creating, human resources development, and action for improving the quality of life. The nonformal adult education program also drew on these three major elements with the aim of promoting critical, analytical, creative, productive, and cooperative powers among illiterate adults. Enhancement of these powers among people was intended to develop their full humanity which is basic to the development of their surrounding environment. As Nyerere (1988) stated, "development is for man, by man, and of man" (p. 7).

Nyerere (1988) felt strongly that nonformal adult education had great human development potential. In this connection, he focused on the scope of nonformal adult education by stating:

> Adult education thus incorporates anything that enlarges men's understanding, activates them, helps them to make their own decisions and to implement those decisions for themselves. It includes training, but is much more than training. It includes what is generally known as "agitation", but is much more than that. It includes organization and mobilization, but it goes beyond them to make them purposeful. (p. 11)

He also proposed that nonformal adult education should serve as a catalyst for change. Nyerere (1988) stated, "the first function of adult education is to inspire both a desire for change, and an understanding that change is possible" (p. 10).

The method of nonformal adult education reflected the emphasis placed on the objective of unleashing innate talents and skills of illiterate adults. More specifically, the methods were designed to help deprived people understand their situation and act to change it accordingly. Nyerere (1988) made the following comment on the method of nonformal adult education:

> the adult educator must involve the learners in their own education, and in practice, from the very beginning. Only activities which involve them in doing something for themselves will provide an on-going sense of achievement and mean that some new piece of knowledge is actually grasped -- that it has been something of "theirs." (p. 14)

He was also concerned about the importance of the appropriate organization of nonformal adult education. According to Nyerere (1988), the organization of adult education "has to reflect the needs, and the resources of each country as well as its culture and its political commitment" (p. 16). In particular the organization of adult education must be different from the formal structure in terms of objectives and learning programs, and personnel involved. Priority would be given to nonformal adult education in terms of resource allocation because it had potential to be a potent force to help people improve their conditions.

These different aspects of nonformal adult education were recognized as having potential to unleash critical consciousness, developing human resource, raising productivity and overcoming oppression. Nyerere felt that the extent to which these elements were developed would determine the future development of Tanzania. He stressed that the state should be involved in the extensive operation of nonformal adult education programs in the country because, in his words, "first we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our development for five, ten or twenty years" (Quoted by Johnsson, Nystrom & Sunden, 1983, p. 4).

## Goals of the Literacy Campaign

Toward the end of the colonial rule, the adult illiteracy rate in Tanzania was as high as 75 percent (Mlekwa, 1990). The severity of the problem aroused national concern and stimulated efforts to tackle the problem. A nonformal adult education campaign was launched involving participants who came from the deprived and disadvantaged masses whose lives were characterized by pessimism, fatalism and low productivity. Attention was given to making learning activities congruent with their life needs and realities.

As has been indicated, Tanzania gave priority to combatting illiteracy after independence through the implementation of a nonformal adult education campaign that focused on such ideals as self-reliance, political mobilization and democracy, all oriented toward increasing access for the majority of the people to jobs, power, wealth, and prestige (Samoff, 1990). In order to give this campaign a definite direction, President Nyerere declared 1970 as the "adult education year" (Mlekwa, 1990; Malya, 1982; Kassam, 1978). In his declaration, President Nyerere pledged that "I shall educate myself to the best of my ability and use my education for the benefit of all" (Quoted by Malya, 1982, p. 146). With this commitment, the nonformal adult education campaign was continued for several years.

The campaign required the political leaders and administrators to show their commitment, both in words and action, to meeting the following objectives (Malya,1982):

> to shake Tanzanians out of their resignation and make them realize what they can do for their community and for themselves;
>
> to provide people with the skills necessary to bring about change in their environment; and
>
> to foster nationwide understanding of the policies of socialism and self-reliance. (p. 146)

The objectives of the nonformal adult education campaign were translated into different programs by making necessary arrangements pertaining to structure, personnel, resources, production and supply of learning materials, training, publicity, and evaluation and follow-up programs (Stultz, 1985). Basically, programs focused on awareness raising, human resource development and rural development.

The awareness raising component stressed changing the participants' perspective on reality into one which would enable them to reflect critically on their circumstances and initiate actions to transform them. The human resource and rural development components emphasized the need to develop socially and economically productive skills and to involve participants in applying these skills so as to improve the quality of their lives. A reflection of the state's emphasis on socialism and self-reliance was evident in the orientation of the nonformal adult education program toward equity and productivity aspects (Kassam, 1978). Several key program components were addressed by the nonformal adult education campaign.

## Raising of Awareness

The awareness raising component of the nonformal adult education campaign was intended to transform the naive consciousness of the illiterate masses into a critical consciousness so that they could dissociate themselves from fatalism, perceive reality critically and begin to realize their power in making themselves subjects of their own destiny in order to bring about positive changes (Gulleth & Ollambo, 1973). In other words, raising the critical consciousness of the illiterate masses involved strengthening their psychological power so that they could analyze problems and identify appropriate solutions.

The learning approach to awareness raising included the "key word" strategy in which the first step was to identify generative words such as "self-reliance" followed by group discussion on that particular word-related situation depicted by some visual aid. In the discussion, the group would critically analyze the situation in question and arrive at conclusions regarding what factors contributed to such a situation and how could it be changed. The next step would be to learn the word itself. For example, the participants would identify problems and needs in different areas such as farming, health, nutrition, and water supply. In the next stage, they would be involved in analyzing different facets of the problem or the need in question with the aim of making them aware of the causes and also involving them in identifying possible solutions. The main intent of this process was to help participants develop their critical perception of reality. In the final step, they would be introduced to the word chosen to discuss a certain theme and also other words derived from the syllables of that particular word (Gulleth & Ollambo, 1973).

Various specific programs in the nonformal adult education campaign included the awareness raising component. The Radio Study Group program involved participants in reflecting on their problems in the areas of health, agriculture, sanitation, family planning, water supply, home making and child care (Kassam, 1978). Subsequently, group efforts were directed at addressing the problems. The awareness raising component was a major focus of other projects such as the Community Centre, Workers' Education and Folk Development Colleges (Ishumi, 1982, Mpogolo, 1980, Sizya, 1990). In general, the government of Tanzania was convinced that a positive change in the life of the poor people depended, among other factors, on developing their powers of critical thinking. Consequently, every project designed to support the campaign emphasized the need for conscientization.

## Human Resource Development

Another major area of the nonformal adult education campaign was related to equipping illiterate adults with basic socio-economic skills. The theory behind this focus was that without human resource development no other physical development could be attained. An urgency was felt for human resource development through nonformal adult education because results from this approach were more likely to come quickly than from the other forms of education within the formal system (Kiyenze, 1985). Therefore, attention was given to disseminating functional information and to organizing training for acquiring practical skills.

The human resource development objective was addressed in various projects. The Workers' Education Program emphasized upgrading occupational skills of illiterate adults in order to help them increase their employment opportunities and productivity. In addition, the need for skill development in farming, cottage industries, occupational trades and in the mobilization of natural resources was also stressed. Even the literacy program included the functional component in promoting social and economic skills as part of human resource development. Similarly, the Radio Study Program gave attention to developing the illiterate adults' knowledge in dealing with basic social, economic, health and environmental problems.

Innovative projects aimed at improving productive skills among women were also launched. For example, the Geita Project involved women in a particular area in developing their skills in sewing, knitting, baking, and homemaking (Meena, 1983). The participating women felt that this project helped them to make some economic gains. Similarly, other activities initiated for the purpose of developing productivity of illiterate adults included extension activities (Lupunga, 1990) and cooperative education which involved learning activities designed to promote understanding of cooperative concepts, principles and practices (Manyanya, 1990).

In order to facilitate the task of human resource development, a training and placement program was introduced (Bwatwa, 1985). The Folk Development Colleges prepared trainers in various disciplines and assigned them to adult centres. Similarly, the Institute of Adult Education, the Department of Adult Education and the University of Dar es Salaam became involved in preparing trained personnel for the adult education centres (Fox & Mjema, 1990).

### Rural Development

Rural development was another important component of the nonformal adult education program. This component emphasized addressing forces that obstructed social, economic, cultural and political development. Illiterate adults were provided with relevant skills and knowledge which were then channeled for use with a view to improving the quality of their lives and the surrounding environment. More specifically, the idea of rural development contained in the nonformal adult education program was oriented toward raising the productivity of the participants and also improving rural social and environmental conditions. The Second Five Year Plan stated that the intent of rural development was to

> include simple training in agricultural techniques and craftsmanship, health education, housecraft, simple economics and accounting, and education in politics and the responsibilities of citizenship. (Quoted by Mlekwa, 1990, p. 127)

Mhaiki (1972) also presented a similar perspective on rural development in noting that its purpose was

> to attack rural development on a frontal basic which calls for the creation of *Ujjama* villages, improvement of agricultural techniques, education for better health, increased cooperation in production, marketing and consumption of goods, the training of administrators and planners as well as the increased involvement of the people in their own plans. (p. 12)

As is evident, these statements encompassed basic social and economic development needs in the rural context.

Pursuit of these rural development objectives was attended to through the mobilization of existing facilities and structures as well as by establishing new ones. As regards involvement of existing structures, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Regional Administration and Rural Development and their affiliated agencies provided leadership. Specific aspects of rural development activities varied across these structures. The Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives conducted improved farming skill programs through extension services, young farmer training, and rural newspaper and radio programs. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare conducted preventive and primary health care programs through the health education unit, rural medical aid and vaccination campaigns while the Ministry of Regional Administration and Rural Development organized orientation programs for senior government officials regarding the process and practice of rural development (Mhaiki & Hall, 1972).

Since rural development was the basis for national development, more attention was given to supporting rural development oriented programs by creating new structures. The establishment of Rural Training Centres was the means for developing agricultural and technical skills. The Cooperative Union of Tanzania organized cooperative societies for the purpose of making more effective use of rural labor, skills and talents. Similarly, the Union of Women of Tanzania focused on women's development needs while the Institute of Development Management emphasized the need for leadership training in rural development theory and practice. The National Institute of Productivity focused on training, consultancy, and research in the fields of management and workers' education, while the Technical and Vocational Training Institutes prepared skilled personnel to work in rural areas (Mhaiki & Hall, 1972). In general, personnel were prepared through diverse training strategies (Isinka, 1989). Subsequently they were involved in transferring their skills to address rural development needs such as improving the agriculture sector, promoting small scale industries and providing social services (Hinzen, 1982).

Another strategy selected for rural development involved re-invigorating the community development centres which had been in existence for several years. These centres were engaged in designing and implementing rural needs-responsive activities. The community development centres were housed in primary schools so that they could serve as "an all-embracing educational institutions that will provide basic functional knowledge and skills for every member of the community - young and old alike" (Ishumi, 1982, p. 73).

The nonformal adult education program in Tanzania seems to have emphasized simultaneously awareness raising, human resource development and rural development components. Implicit in this strategy was the idea that in order to meet the need for total human development, resources had to be made available and opportunities provided that could help direct all human capabilities toward improving living conditions. This was evident in the Tanzanian policy of nonformal adult education since independence. The Second Five Year Plan, 1969-1974, Adult Education Year Speech, 31, December, 1970, 15th and 16th TANU Biennial Conferences, 1971-1973, and the Prime Minister's Directive on Workers' Education advocated conscientization, human resource development and rural development, including the learning of literacy and numeracy as the basis for the policy of nonformal adult education (Mlekwa, 1990).

## Management of Nonformal Adult Education

In order to ensure effective operation of the nonformal adult education programs, attention was given to various management-related aspects such as reorganization and establishment of structures, training of personnel, appropriation of resources, development, production and distribution of learning materials, program operations methodology and follow-up activities.

## Structural Organization

With the launching of the nonformal adult education campaign, attention was given to reorganizing the existing structures, particularly in the education sector, and establishing new ones as were necessary. The Ministry of Education, which was entrusted with the responsibility for initiating, organizing, coordinating and administering nonformal adult education activities, mobilized the educational network at the regional and district levels (Mlekwa, 1990). Within the Ministry of Education, the Department of Adult Education was created and made accountable for planning, finance, research, evaluation, radio programs, curriculum development, and the production and distribution of materials (Mlekwa, 1990).

Regional and district adult education officers, assisted by regional and district coordinators, were appointed at both levels. Similarly, at ward and village levels, coordinators, who usually were head teachers of the primary schools, were appointed (Mlekwa, 1990). In general, a structural system was created to ensure implementation of nonformal adult education activities throughout the country. At each level, ranging from the national to the village level, an advisory committee consisting of party officials, government personnel, heads of agencies in areas such as agriculture and health, and students' representatives was established, mainly for the purpose of providing support to the nonformal adult education personnel (Mlekwa, 1990). The structural management for the operation of the nonformal adult education campaign in Tanzania had, as Mlekwa (1990) stated, "a dual character: provision for central direction (top-down structure) as well as people's participation from the grassroots level to the national level" (p. 132).

Responsibilities were allocated in such a way that the Ministry of Education was involved in providing central direction while regions, districts, divisions and wards looked after activities such as site selection for classrooms, recruitment of voluntary teachers, distribution of materials, and establishment of coordinating and advisory committees

(Mlekwa, 1990). In essence, the structural arrangement encompassed a mix of the top-down and the bottom-up approaches in order to capitalize on the potential of each for contributing to achieving the goals.

Other forms of organization were involved in conducting training programs. The Institute of Adult Education, Colleges of National Education, The Mwanza Literacy Project, the University of Dar Es Salaam, Folk Development Colleges, the National Institute of Productivity, the National Correspondence Institute and Radio Study Group (Kassam, 1978) were involved in conducting training activities both for adult educators and the participants. A diverse infrastructure played a key role in addressing the administrative, training, and organizational needs required to attain the objectives of the campaign.

## Literacy Workers' Training

Adult educators were recruited from a number of sources in order to promote learning activities at the field level (Mlekwa, 1990). For example, professional teachers, students, party officials, government employees, volunteers and number of religious denominations were mobilized. Many of the facilitators were volunteers who were paid only a small honorarium of about seven US dollars per month (Unsicker, 1987). The next largest body after volunteers consisted of professional teachers. They were given special training in workshops organized by regional and district adult education personnel (Unsicker, 1987).

In addition to field level adult educators, other personnel required to work at the regional, district, division and ward levels were also employed and trained. These officers were given the responsibility for organizing and coordinating nonformal adult education activities in their respective jurisdictions. Most important, the participants were involved in planning and decision-making regarding their learning needs (Kassam, 1978). In this way, the government attempted to mobilize all possible resources in order to fulfill the personnel needs for the operation of the campaign.

### Acquiring Resources

Tanzania needed a massive amount of funds to carry out the nonformal adult education campaign. The undertaking was expensive since funds were required not only for producing and distributing materials but also for meeting costs of administration, transport, personnel, emoluments, seminars and training, purchasing radio sets, tape recorders, cinema vans as well as establishing rural libraries, rural newspapers and work-oriented projects (Mlekwa, 1990).

In order to meet the ever increasing financial requirements, both national and international sources were accessed. On the national side, the government allocated at least 10 percent of the total budget to nonformal education. The international contribution was also significant. Numerous organizations and countries such as UNESCO, UNDP, Sweden, China, USSR, Germany, India, Japan, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands and Norway provided significant amounts of assistance (Mlekwa, 1990). Of these sources, Sweden provided a substantial amount of aid; whenever there was shortage of funds, Swedish support filled the gap.

Outside assistance was essential because the launching of a literacy campaign was a major undertaking for Tanzania. In addition, the national commitment was also strong in terms of mobilizing available internal resources. Both external and internal sources played a key role in carrying out the campaign.

### Learning Materials

In conjunction with the awareness raising, human resource development and rural development focuses of the campaign, various primers were produced. These primers were of twelve different types which included content on agriculture, home economics, national ideology, health related knowledge and skills, and environmental information. A teachers' handbook was developed for every primer; some of the primers had demonstration guides, especially for agriculture practices (Kassam, 1978). In total, 25 million primers and more than 1.25 million teacher's guides were produced between 1972 and 1975. These materials were distributed to participants free of cost (Mlekwa, 1990, Kassam, 1978).

Primers were developed in writers' workshops where discussions were held regarding appropriate presentation of the identified themes so as to arouse the participants' motivation to learn. Materials of other types such as posters, pamphlets, and flip charts which contained functional messages were also produced. These materials were printed both in the government and private printing services (Mpogolo, 1985).

### Methodological Approach

Different types of methodologies such as short lectures, dialogue, discussion, group work and demonstration were used in the nonformal education learning activities. The short lecture method was used in introducing new concepts while the dialogue method was applied in attempting to identify the learners' knowledge of the concepts in question. Through the application of this method, emphasis was placed on involving the participants in sharing their ideas and experiences. Whenever there was confusion about certain components of the concept in discussion, facilitators would provide clarification (Mpogolo, 1985).

The discussion method was most popular, perhaps because this method involved both action and response with respect to the subject matter. Since the participants had opportunities to listen, to formulate opinions and to express ideas, they were able to clarify their learning. The facilitators, on the other hand, also learned to understand the participants in terms of their knowledge, attitudes and levels of information (Mpogolo, 1985).

The group work and the demonstration methods helped the participants think about their problems, to formulate plans and to embark on projects. Above all, these methods led the participants to be resourceful and independent in terms of meeting their needs, broadening their perceptions, building their confidence and reflecting on themselves (Mpogolo, 1985).

### Follow-up Program

Literacy tests were administered in the years 1975, 1977, 1981, 1983, and 1986 with a view to assessing the achievement of the nonformal adult education campaign. The result was impressive in terms of reduced illiteracy rates which fell from an initial 67 percent to about 10 percent in 1986 (Lawsay, 1989). However, the level of achievement was not the same for all of the participants. Mpogolo (1985) identified four levels of achievement in literacy. The post-literacy program focused particularly on helping those who were at the fourth level, but participants at the other levels were also provided with follow-up learning program. This involved the introduction of a post-literacy program with the objectives of helping the participants retain previously learned knowledge and skills, literalizing the environment through a network of rural libraries, rural newspapers, and radio and film education, improving the participants' communication skill, providing further political education, improving functional skills in agriculture, handicrafts, home economics, health and water supply, and providing further knowledge about Tanzanian history, culture, tradition and society (Mpogolo, 1985).

These objectives of the post-literacy program were consistent with the campaign objectives which were linked to conscientization, human resource development and rural development. All of the structures which were involved in carrying out the campaign also operated the follow-up activities. The need for human development was perceived as a continuous process for which the opportunities for further learning was provided through the post-literacy program.

## Discussion

Critics were skeptical as to whether the campaign had contributed to an overall development of the society because they argued that remarkable achievements in literacy would hardly determine any positive impact on the economy. Several factors may account for this situation. First, the purpose of the campaign was to help people help themselves by gradually releasing their development potential. An emphasis was not placed on producing a highly skilled human resource which was considered an important determinant of economic development. Second, Tanzania was involved in a war against Uganda which consumed a massive amount of resources. Third, as a primary products exporting country, for which there was a poor price in the international market, Tanzania's economic position declined. Nevertheless, there were some encouraging signs of change which could be considered as accomplishments.

## Accomplishments

Tanzania was the first African country to launch a nonformal adult education campaign with a view to addressing the problems associated with ignorance, hunger and disease. In this connection, the political philosophy of *socialism and self-reliance* advocated by President Nyerere served as a guiding force in attempting to develop people's creative, analytic, productive and cooperative powers. Undoubtedly, the political will of the government was a crucial step to address the need to free the masses from deprivation and to help people to live a better life.

In order to bring about a qualitative change in the lives of the people, learning programs focused on such areas of development as agriculture, health, nutrition, income-generation activities, family planning, environment and homemaking was an appropriate strategy. The programs appeared to help the participants reflect on the problems associated with these areas and to think about possibilities for improvement.

Mobilization of existing infrastructures and creating new ones as was necessary helped not only to produce trained personnel but also to offer the participants facilities to initiate application of the learned skills. Use of a variety of settings such as schools, health centres, cooperative buildings, offices, factories, and even the shade of trees for the learning purposes was an innovative approach.

Developing twelve different types of primers dealing with the participants' social, economic, political and cultural realities was a significant achievement. Experts had opportunities to contribute to the development of content and methods, language, graphics and layout of the primers. That these materials were written in *Swahili* which is understood throughout the country was an important accomplishment. Relevance of these materials was also tested in terms of content, presentation and use of the language.

Radio and other mass media played a key role in conducting promotional activities during the campaign. The radio program included three main series, namely, a motivational series, an educational series on agriculture and home life topics, and a series aimed at the literacy teachers. Both radio and newspapers were used to publicize important activities. Competitions were arranged for composing songs and poems about the campaign. Class competitions were held with respect to attendance, the number of graduates produced, the construction of classrooms and writing of letters. Schools, colleges, social institutions, military camps and even textile factories took part in accelerating the movement of the campaign. The participants made encouraging educational gains; they increased their reading habit and were motivated to acquire new knowledge. As a result, the demand for newspapers and books increased both in urban and rural areas. The participants seemed to be interested in applying better nutrition, health and hygiene practices.

The government's attempt to create an effective coordination system in order to ensure the smooth operation of the campaign was a significant step. To this end, an institutional force was created by involving various ministries, institutions and organizations, hand in hand with the Ministry of Education in implementing basic needs-responsive projects such as the malaria control project, the health education campaign, the cotton project, the maize project, the afforestation campaign, the improved housing campaign and the AIDS control campaign. In various ways, these activities were linked to awareness raising, human resource and rural development dimensions.

Program monitoring and evaluation constituted an important component of the campaign. In addition to literacy tests, reports were collected from regional, district, division and ward level coordinators; class attendance records were obtained; program inspectors' reports were assessed; and central level authorities made field visits. These strategies helped draw feedback which served to guide the program.

The follow-up program was one of the important aspects of the campaign. Provision for post-literacy learning opportunities helped the participants retain skills and knowledge which they had learned previously. Under this program, they were provided with textbooks, rural newspapers, rural libraries, correspondence education, evening classes, week-end schools, documentary films, instructional radio programs and folk development colleges. As a result, there was enhanced enthusiasm for learning among some participants.

In economic terms, the campaign contributed to improving employment opportunities for an increased number of the participants. They were considered potential additions to the expanding teaching, supervision and administrative work force. In social and political terms, the campaign helped the participants understand the meaning and importance of unity, cooperation and familyhood, resulting eventually in the building of the nation's political culture oriented to *socialism and self-reliance*.

In general, the nonformal adult education campaign of Tanzania accomplished the objective of helping poor and illiterate people acquire knowledge, skill and information which aroused their innate talents and resourcefulness, and helped them to improve the qualitative level of their lives. These accomplishments occurred as a result of the government's political commitment accompanied by both human and material resources. In addition, various administrative and managerial strategies were also developed. Numerous achievements in terms of mass mobilization, awareness raising, skill development, literacy rate, and rural development seem to have been realized. Tanzania was able to reduce the illiteracy rate to about 10 percent. Regarding the overall achievement of the campaign, Mpogolo (1990) stated,

> individual adults have changed their attitudes, their way of thinking and feeling. They have lost their state of marginality and fear, and now participate freely in various political and economic planning, decision making and implementing activities - from the village to the national level. (p. 5)

### Challenges

In addition to accomplishments, various problems also existed. Primarily, Tanzanian nonformal adult education as part of the national education policy suffered from excessive politicization during the 1970s and later from an increased emphasis on technocratic orientation (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990). This situation indicates that policy decisions about nonformal education programs were influenced at one time by over emphasis on political ideology and in another time by greater recognition of the technocratic role. A pragmatic approach to integrating both elements for realizing a higher level of effectiveness in the program was lacking.

The nonformal adult education campaign attempted ambitiously to actualize the political philosophy of *socialism and self-reliance*. High priority was given to mass mobilization; however, this attracted attention away from other requirements. Among these other needs were the adequate production and distribution of learning materials, preparation of trained personnel, inclusion of the functional component in the campaign, generation of the participants' spontaneous motivation, and development of the appropriate evaluation strategy and effective coordination system (IIEP, 1990). Because of these problems, authorities became oriented toward fulfilling quantitative targets. Consequently, a simultaneous focus on critical awareness, human resource development and rural development was not maintained to a desirable degree.

Similarly, in spite of the understanding that participants' involvement is crucial in deciding the types of materials and the operational strategies of the program, the top-down approach was predominant. For example, all primers were centrally decided and produced without efforts to assessing the participants' reality and needs (IIEP, 1990).

The entire national attention was focused on the campaign. Substantial internal and external resources were accessed, leaving very little for other forms and levels of education. The lack of resources for higher education appears to have been responsible for a reduction in intermediate and high level training which then became an impediment to economic growth. Eventually, not only did the flow of aid from the West slow, but external pressure was put on countries such as Sweden to reconsider the level of financial assistance. As a result, Tanzania faced a severe resource problem during the latter phase of the campaign. Furthermore, a change in the political climate in Tanzania prompted a shift in emphasis from basic education to secondary and higher education (Carnoy & Samoff, 1990). Indeed, Tanzania's policy on education swung from one extreme to the other. A pragmatic approach to striking a balance, considering the delicate situation an economically underdeveloped country like Tanzania has to face, was missing. The problem of resource constraint was aggravated further by the military conflict with Uganda.

Although the nonformal adult education campaign emphasized the need not only for providing literacy knowledge and skills but also for enabling the participants to acquire and to implement functional skills, it was not clear in what ways learning led to sustained action. There is reason to doubt the claim that the participants had changed their living conditions by adopting better health and dietary practices and also had increased farm productivity. The grounds for skepticism arise since the prominence of literacy in the program did not have enough opportunities for the participants to learn and apply skills related to an improved condition of living socially and economically (Mlekwa, 1990).

## Implications

Tanzania's determination to develop human qualities among illiterate adults was effective in that the adult illiteracy rate was reduced dramatically. This success was achieved as a result of harmony between the national ideology and the government's policy decision (Fordham, 1990). Together they were a strong force directed at a noble cause. Without real national commitment, a massive task such as eradicating illiteracy was not likely to be accomplished.

For a significant policy initiative such as the operation of a nationwide campaign on nonformal adult education, carrying out pilot projects and allowing an adequate amount of time would seem to be important for gaining experiences and insight. The Unesco-sponsored World Experimental Literacy Program, which Tanzania conducted before declaring the adult education campaign, was considered helpful for creating a framework on which to develop and launch the later campaign (Kassam, 1978).

An economically poor country requires enormous resources in order to launch an adult education campaign. To this end, resources must be mobilized both internally and externally. External resources may be essential because internal resources will have to be distributed to other areas of national development. A long-term flow of external assistance probably will be necessary to achieve the goal. In order to ensure this, the government should play a politically pragmatic role. In particular, governments should try to understand the intent of donor countries and to accommodate these intents subtly while making its own policy decisions. Sometimes this situation may require countries to be flexible in terms of political philosophy and at the same time not hamper the greater national interest. Instead of making policy decisions on ideological basis, striving for a balance between national and international forces may be advisable.

Another important area for consideration relates to the type of program. The target groups to be involved in the nonformal adult education program generally come from the socially, economically and educationally disadvantaged masses. The learning objectives for them would require not just the provision of literacy but also other social and economic skills so that they will be able to make real gains to improve their living conditions. In underdeveloped societies, learning programs which do not provide enhanced income-generation are likely to be of little meaning to the participants. Even though literacy is "potential added" for an individual, it may not contribute to generating immediate material benefit, thereby contributing to a participants' disenchantment with the program (IIEP, 1990).

Although mobilization of all national forces appears to be the prerequisite for the operation of a literacy campaign, care should be taken to prepare for dealing with potential challenges and problems. In this context, there must not only be a commitment to the noble cause and but also the ability to perceive the situation rationally.

Frequently, concerns are expressed relating to the need for mobilizing adequate internal resources. This is more likely to occur if people's participation is encouraged at all levels of program development. Central control is likely to diminish people's sense of ownership in the program. Participation should be understood in terms of people's physical, mental, experiential and intellectual involvement.

In order to raise the qualitative effectiveness and quantitative expansion of the program and also to reduce foreign resource dependency gradually, a national policy decision aimed at making nonformal education as an integral part of various other development programs seems reasonable.

## Summary

Despite economic underdevelopment, Tanzania took the initiative to launch a nonformal adult education campaign directed toward combatting the ignorance, disease and hunger which prevailed among the poor masses. The most noteworthy aspect was the political commitment of the government which made it possible to mobilize substantial national forces. The international support was no less significant, particularly at the outset. As a result, the illiteracy rate was reduced dramatically. Attempts were also made to raise awareness and to develop other life-related skills among the participants. Indications are that Tanzania was able to accomplish many of its goals. However, there were both internal and external challenges and problems. As a result, there has been a shift in emphasis regarding educational policy. The Tanzanian experience suggests a number of guidelines for a realistic approach to nonformal adult education program.

# CHAPTER 6

# THE NICARAGUAN LITERACY CRUSADE

Immediately after the success of the Sandanista-led revolution, the new Nicaraguan government mounted a literacy crusade not only to eliminate illiteracy but also to enhance the prospects for national reconstruction. The revolutionary context was regarded as instrumental to the success of the crusade. The analysis in this chapter focuses first on the historical evolution of the social, economic and political situation. This is followed by a discussion of the educational context with special reference to the literacy crusade. More specifically, the analysis focuses on the philosophical underpinnings of the literacy crusade, program focus and management, accomplishments and problems, and on some implications.

## Political, Economic and Social Context

Nicaragua is located in the middle of Central America. The central mountain region divides the country into two prominent regions, namely, the Eastern Caribbean Lowlands and the Western Highlands (Christensen, 1988). The largest of the Central American countries with an area of 140,621 square kilometres, Nicaragua shares borders with Honduras and Costa Rica. On the basis of settlement, the country can be divided into four regions: the West including the Pacific highlands, the highland frontier, the Empty lands including the Caribbean coastal plains, and the East with settlements at the mouths of the rivers (Kurian, 1987).

The population of Nicaragua was estimated at 3,038,000 in 1985 on the basis of the 1971 official census when it was 1,877,952. It is projected to reach 4.9 million by 2000. The population settlement pattern is quite diverse since 58.2 percent live in the Pacific Zone, 35.2 percent in the Central Zone and the remaining 6.6 percent in the Atlantic Zone (Kurian, 1987).

As many as 96 percent of the population speak Spanish, which is the official language. The percentage of non-Spanish speaking population has been decreasing because people living in the Atlantic Zone seem to have endorsed the government's policy to popularize the Spanish language (Kurian, 1987).

Nicaragua has a long colonial history. The colonial powers which controlled Nicaragua shaped its political, economic, social and educational structures as was suited to maximizing benefits for them. Even after independence from the Spanish in 1826, the country did not enjoy political freedom and economic development. The oppressive and dynastic rule of the Somoza family from late 1930s to late 1970s was characterized by economic exploitation, social stratification, political repression and educational restriction.

The early Spanish colonizers, whose main purpose was to extract economic profit rather than to settle in the occupied territory, exploited natural resources indiscriminately, involved themselves in the slave trade and mobilized labor inhumanely. In addition, they banished the native people from their land and made themselves the owners (Christensen, 1988). Alienated from their land, the native people had no other option than to work as wage laborers which relegated them to a bare subsistence level of living.

Feudal mercantilism, landlordship and monopolistic control of resources denied the native people their economic rights, forcing them to become dependent on the colonialists for survival. Consequently, social divisions in the form of the master and serf emerged. The native people were subjugated to Spanish prescriptions in every aspect of life (political, economic, social, cultural, legal and educational) and this systematically eliminated their presence as a distinct entity. They were socialized and acculturalized in such a way that they could not think of themselves as something more than serfs (Christensen, 1988).

The people of Nicaragua had hoped for liberty, democracy and freedom after the termination of Spanish control; unfortunately this did not materialize. Even though the nation was legally independent after the departure of the Spanish in 1826, it became vulnerable to external political and military forces which destabilized the country by creating dissension and conflict among the people. Specifically, American interest in Nicaragua was deepening. The Americans resorted to all sorts of political maneuvering and eventually established a government which they protected militarily and financially. As a result, a dynastic autocratic rule emerged in the country. The Somoza dynasty ruled Nicaragua for over four decades, from the late 1930s to the late 1970s (World University Service, 1987).

Under the feudal rule of the Somoza dynasty, Nicaragua faced almost the same fate as under Spanish colonial rule. The only difference now was that there was no direct control by the foreign colonialists but by some powerful indigenous people. The Somoza regime controlled, manipulated and moulded every aspect of national life as suited their interests (Torres, 1990).

On the economic front, the dynastic rule introduced "autocratic development-from-above-and-outside" model (Arnove, 1986) which did not allow for sustaining economic growth because as Arnove (1986) stated:

> The Somoza family involved capitalization of agriculture for export; concentration of capital and land in fewer, large-scale farming enterprises which had the effect of driving small owners and tenant farmers out of the land and out of subsistence agriculture; limited industrialization, often of a capital-intensive nature...and for domestic luxury consumption or foreign export. (p. 3)

An economic structure was created that served the elites in power and the economic interests of the foreign capitalists. In other words, the Nicaraguan economy was characterized by conditioned capitalism (Torres, 1991).

The dynastic control over the economy was legitimized by the repressive political system which denied people the right to participate in decision making (Arnove, 1986). In other words, the state was geared towards depoliticizing the consciousness of the people leading them eventually to be submissive to all sorts of political domination (Christensen, 1988). The state's apparatus, generally the army and the police, was used to curb the political rights of people. Above all, the oligarchic rule of the Somoza family denied the people their democratic rights and subjected them to a reign of terror. The regime made its power base stronger by serving foreign interests at the expense of the people.

This act of the government sublimated people's social as well as economic energy. Their political and economic disempowerment stratified the social structure into different hierarchical divisions where the dominant class, identified on the basis of the relative extent of power, enjoyed the privileges of exploiting the less powerful classes. Such a stratification capacitated the oppressors to maintain the status-quo. Social harmony, unity, mobility and interaction were discouraged, thereby limiting people's power for growth and progress (Christensen, 1988). The Somoza regime grossly restricted through its policies and actions people's development and, instead amassed fortunes for themselves and their supporters. The regime not only resorted to political and economic oppression but also structured an education system which was oriented towards domesticating the people (Christensen, 1988).

## The Educational Context

The educational structures served to strengthen the dynastic rule with absolute control over the social, political and economic fronts in generally the same way as during the colonialists' era. Colonial education was strongly oriented to assimilating the native people in order to fulfill colonial interests. This strategy resulted in people's submission to an oppressive state. They were infused with such values and myths that they accepted their wretched life as the natural order of things and an act of fate. On the other hand, there was a separate form of education for the elites of the ruling class and their faithful servants. Elite education focused on developing the cultural values and professional skills which made elites believe in their right to rule (Christensen, 1988).

Following independence from the Spanish in 1826 and before the rise of dynastic rule in 1939, the role of education was defined in terms of economic development, modernization and enlightenment. Accordingly, students were involved in acquiring skills and knowledge which were dictated by the national curricula. New concepts about education such as egalitarianism through education, education for political participation and education as a promoter of the values of individualism, moralism, industry and honesty emerged. As opposed to the dictatorial pedagogy designed to domesticate and exploit the weaker majority, the modern concept of education emphasized the need for liberation, equality and economic development. Disappointingly, this concept, which was being accepted then as instrumental for economic development in other parts of the world, was discarded in Nicaragua in favor of the elitist education by the Somoza dynasty (Christensen, 1988).

Under the Somoza regime, Nicaragua suffered a serious set-back in education, except for a few years in the 1950s and 1960s when foreign aid helped with educational expansion. The regime was apprehensive about implementing the modernization model of education even though it was recommended by the protector of the regime, the Americans. Somoza's policies were autocratic to the extent that every single educational program was screened by the ruler himself (Christensen, 1988).

During the 1970s, education in Nicaragua deteriorated even further. As Arnove (1988, 1986) indicated, towards the end of the 1970s Nicaragua's education system was considerably behind in the sense that almost half of the population (50.35 percent) was illiterate while more than 76 percent of rural people were unable to read and write. There were 25,000 participants in adult education programs, the majority of which were operated by the private sector and church groups. Primary education served only 65 percent of the relevant age group. The private sector operated pre-primary education programs reached just 5.3 percent of children. Furthermore, Arnove (1988, 1986) stated that problems such as low completion and high dropout rates characterized the formal system; only 22 percent completed the sixth grade. The rural areas suffered most. In rural areas schools consisting of only one or two grades were operated with a single teacher, with limited provision for instructional materials and other physical facilities.

The government under the Somoza control intentionally slashed the progress of basic education. Sanders (1983) quoted an expression of a peasant who said, "Somoza never taught us to read -- it was really ungrateful of him, was not it? He knew that if he taught us to read we would claim our rights" (p. 22). The Somoza regime was quite aware of the potential threat which was likely to be posed by "conscious" people. As Father Fernando Cardenal (quoted by Sanders, 1980) stated, "under Somoza, Nicaragua was run as a family plantation. The promotion of universal literacy or adult education was irrelevant and potentially threatening" (p. 22).

Arnove (1986) presented the same view when he stated: "A mass system of public schooling that would foster the education of critical, inquiring citizens made little sense in a society characterized by limited opportunity in the modern sector of economy and constricted opportunity for political participation" (p. 13). In contrast, higher education was given more favor simply because the potential participants at this level were the urban elites who were considered Somoza supporters, based on past experience. Elites were served at the cost of the poor majority, basically with the intent of enlisting their further support for the legitimacy of the totalitarian regime (Arnove, 1986).

Not only was the education system discriminatory but it also was designed to serve foreign capitalistic powers. The United States was the major role player in shaping the education system of Nicaragua, particularly in the areas of curriculum development and implementation, text-book development, teacher training, and above all educational planning (Arnove, 1986). The prescriptions had the effect of socializing Nicaragua into American interests. Hard pressed by external interest and internal insincerity, the educational sector in Nicaragua was characterized by acculturalization, socialization and domestication. Human development in totality was neglected because fullness in humanity was perceived to be against the interests of the rulers.

## Revolution and the Literacy Campaign

Revolutionary offensives against the series of corrupt dictators and their supporters who exercised absolute power over the state were waged for several years. Ultimately, in 1979 the revolution succeeded in ending the dynastic rule and instituting a revolutionary Sandinista government (Carnoy & Torres, 1990). After coming to power, the Sandinista government initiated social, political, economic and educational restructuralization. The economy was precarious, education was not developed, social inequality was escalating, and political repression was the order of the day (Carnoy & Torres, 1990). To counteract such a desperate situation, national reconstruction became a sequel to the revolution. The government committed itself to redistributing the land to the peasants and establishing a socially-oriented mixed economy. Similarly, it changed the political and repressive structures of government with an emphasis on democratic values and principles. Even opposition was accommodated in the national legislature (Carnoy & Torres, 1990). On the whole, the Sandanista government, as Miller (Quoted by Arnove, 1988) stated,

> shared a general development orientation that was socialist in character...Development and transformation, they believed, depended in the short run on national reconstruction and in the long run on a transition to socialism...According to this view attainment of such a society required economic growth, extensive redistribution of power and wealth, and broad-based citizen participation. (pp. 2-3)

As a reflection of this development philosophy, the government set a new educational policy which rested on

> the emergence of the great majority of the people formerly dispossessed and socially excluded, as the active protagonists of their own education;
>
> the elimination of illiteracy and the introduction of adult education as priority tasks of the Revolution;
>
> the linking of the educational process with creative and productive work as an educational principle, leading to educational innovation and promoting the scientific and technical fields; and,
>
> the transformation and realignment of the education system as a whole, so as to bring it into line with the new economic and social model. (Arnove & Dewees, 1991, p. 94)

With a focus on these principles, the Sandinista government attempted to make education play a key role in bringing about social change by preparing critically conscious, voluntarily participative and economically productive citizens. Towards this end, the government's most significant step was to mount the national literacy crusade, among other reforms.

The literacy crusade was a second mass uprising: a "cultural insurrection" (Arnove, 1988) as a sequel to armed struggle against the Somoza regime. The crusade was prompted by the need to reduce illiteracy, which ranged from 60 to 90 percent in rural areas, to create awareness among the illiterates and to liberate them from their oppression. The intent was to rebuild the confidence of the deprived masses that they were masters of their own destiny. This was partly to be done by restoring their rights and privileges which had been denied by the dictatorial regime (Arnove & Dewees, 1991, Arnove, 1988). Geared towards fulfilling this need, the national literacy crusade set the following goals:

> to eradicate illiteracy; to increase the skills related to creativity, production, cooperation, discipline and analytic thinking; to enhance the political consciousness of the population; to integrate the mass organizations; to have the rural and urban, the young and old, poor and middle class share each other's class experiences and life styles; to increase the population's commitment to the potential for the revolution; to strengthen economic and political channels for their participation in society; to support national cohesion and consensus; and to release their cultural expressions. (Cardenal & Miller in Christensen, 1988, p. 143)

Specifically, the implications of these objectives were to fight against the force of the status quo, to help people overcome their ignorance, naivety and fatalism, and to acquire scientific and technical skills in order to build a new basis for capital accumulation (Carnoy & Torres, 1990).

For the realization of the real intent of the literacy crusade, various well defined strategies were laid out. As Grigsby (1985) indicated, these strategies included involving the participants in the dialogical process of learning aimed at raising their critical awareness, organizing themselves in promoting literacy learning, developing their understanding of literacy as a countervailing force against the unjust system, designing learning programs that address their social, economic, political and cultural needs, and giving due attention to fulfilling various requirements such as professionalism of the teachers, material resources, and infrastructure and technology.

In general, the goals and strategies of the literacy crusade were integrated into the historical and cultural reality of Nicaragua with the aim of changing the feudalistic structure into one where humanism, equality and solidarity along with economic development exist as the major emphases (Aulestia, 1983). Relevant program activities and the management of implementation were also developed.

## Program Focus and Management

Although elimination of illiteracy through conscientization formed the major focus of the literacy crusade and the subsequent follow-up popular education program, the need for human resource and rural development aspects was also recognized. The management part, on the other hand, focused upon planning, personnel and training, selection of material and method, and structural arrangements and finance.

### Program Focus

Priority was given to selecting program areas by reflecting on the revolutionary context of Nicaragua. Arousing critical consciousness among illiterate adults regarding their roles and responsibilities as the makers of history was the most important program component. Towards that end, a more politically inclined program with the intent of involving people in critically examining their reality, illiteracy and desperate living conditions, and also organizing them to take the initiative in dealing with these conditions was advocated (Christensen, 1988). Accordingly, the pedagogy was attuned to diverse themes which included the struggle for national liberation, elimination of exploitation, power of mass organization in defending the nation, citizenry rights and responsibilities, women's liberation from a degraded social status and national integration (Arnove, 1986).

Although the crusade was prompted by the urgency for freeing the people from dehumanized conditions and fostering human values characterized by self-confidence, self-worth and self-power for a better existence, it was exceedingly political in nature (Torres, 1991). The orientation of the crusade was increasingly inclined towards creating people's strong psychological capabilities for coping with contradictions.

Next to this emphasis were the physical aspects of development which included participants' skill training and their involvement in activities oriented mainly towards rural development. The literacy workers, in association with the participants, carried out activities with social and economic potential such as building latrines and roads, picking coffee, sowing crops, recording statistical information on the environment, and providing primary medical care and methods for healthy living (Christensen, 1988). Similarly, Gander (1983) noted that the participants were encouraged to become involved in health, housing, economic and other projects of individual as well as national interest. The literacy crusade was an attempt to address a broad spectrum of national development needs.

In order to retain the impact of the crusade, popular basic education was implemented as a follow-up program. Popular education in Sandanista rhetoric meant "a learning process which combined manual with intellectual labor, theory with praxis, productive skills with political consciousness" (Torres, 1991, p. 117). The objective of the program was to enable the participants in the crusade to attain, at the least, the standard of a primary education. The pedagogy was inclined not only to academic learning but also to other life-related aspects such as health and nutrition, women's and workers' rights, occupational safety, land reform and cooperatives, civil defense and current national events (Arnove & Dewees, 1991).

The human resource and rural development components were not stressed as explicitly as was the conscientization aspect. However, the nature of activities, associated particularly with the follow-up popular basic education, included such aspects as organization of cooperatives for increased farm productivity and skill training of the participants. The purpose was to involve them in various technical and vocational activities associated with rural development and human resource development purposes.

### Management and Planning

The Sandanistas had a vision of Nicaragua as a new nation. Towards this end, the revolutionary government's first step was to make the nation literate. Accordingly, the government was pro-active in making necessary arrangements. Specifically, there was willingness to learn from the experiences of other countries such as Cuba (Sanders, 1983).

Planning of the literacy crusade included several important aspects such as defining the objectives, making personnel arrangements, scanning the environment, building appropriate structures, ensuring vertical as well as horizontal coordination and reciprocal flows of communication (Grigsby, 1985). The planning process gave attention to meeting the structural as well as pedagogical needs. Specifically, the structural arrangement was carefully designed with a view to addressing all important elements such as setting program goals, identifying pedagogical needs, organizing logistics and personnel, publicity, and producing and distributing materials. The government was cautious while planning the crusade so as not to ignore the importance of the history of other nations' literacy campaigns, the national political commitment and resources potentially available within and outside of the country.

### Personnel and Training

Mounting the literacy crusade was a gigantic task for which massive involvement of people was necessary. The youth population that removed the Somoza dynasty from power was enlisted again to fight against illiteracy as literacy volunteers. To decide how many volunteers were needed for carrying out the crusade, both in urban and rural areas, a census was taken (Grigsby, 1985). According to Torres (1991), the crusade involved more than 80,000 literacy workers, 50,000 youth brigade members, 30,000 literacy teachers and more than 400,000 adults.

Providing training to the field level facilitators to attune them to the goals of the crusade such as national liberation and reconstruction was also emphasized. Accordingly, a two-dimensional training framework was designed and implemented (Grigsby, 1985). The first concerned with the potential trainees' political, ideological, physical and psychological formation and the second had a technical and pedagogical focus. A participatory approach was applied to carry out the training program, ranging from the central to the grassroots level. In order to meet the requirement of the speedy supply of trained personnel, the training activity was expanded by involving the newly trained to train many other new trainees.

### Material and Method

Since the crux of the nonformal adult education crusade lay in enabling people to understand, analyze and transform their existing reality into one where they could generate capabilities to make their own decisions and act accordingly, various types of learning materials with potential to realize this objective were developed and used (Gander, 1983). Specially, visual-aids in different forms such as posters, slogans, graffiti, murals, and wall newspapers were produced on a mass scale (Aulestia, 1983). The existing reality was depicted in these materials, through which the participants were involved in studying and analyzing what was happening and in creating ideas as to how to bring about desired changes.

Similarly, both traditional and non-traditional media were used to consolidate people's commitment to revolutionary transformation. The traditional media included oral histories, legends, myths, music, dance, folklore theater, and graphic art, whereas the non-traditional media incorporated radio and television. A range of innovative efforts was brought to bear on the design and use of diverse materials and media as a means not only for raising the motivation but also for enabling people to make their learning practically meaningful.

The mode of learning emphasized the need for a high level of interaction among the participants so as to involve every individual learner in sharing ideas and experiences with other learners. Implicit in this approach was the idea of involving the participants in coming to realize their self-worth and capabilities for removing the evils of the existing reality. To this end, priority was given to experiential learning, dialogue, group discussion and collective problem solving (Rojo, 1984). Application of these approaches seemed to be helpful in closing the gap between the tutors and participants, and in accepting the fact that tutors and participants have equally important roles to play in the learning process.

### Structure

Attaining the goals of the literacy crusade of Nicaragua was assumed to be largely dependent on effective organizational structures. In this context, a National Literacy Commission was established with the participation of the revolutionary, popular and government organizations and institutions. A National Coordination Committee under the Ministry of Education was also established. Both establishments ranged from the central to the municipal level (Grigsby, 1985).

The National Coordination Committee consisted of six divisions: administration, technical, pedagogy, organization, design and production, and publicity and propaganda. These technical-administrative structures also functioned at the departmental and municipal levels. Essentially, these structures were crucial for achieving effective outcomes. Moreover, since the municipality was the basic organizational unit for the operation of the crusade, major political decisions related to the crusade were made at this level. In other words, the importance of decentralization, mainly with the aim of mobilizing the masses, was emphasized (Grigsby, 1985).

### Financial Provision

Nicaragua was almost bankrupt when the Sandanistas came to power. Despite the financial crisis, the government made the decision to mount the literacy crusade. The rising wave of popular support for the revolutionary government provided the strong grounds on which this major decision was based. The government was confident of eliciting widespread participation in the operation of the crusade. Indeed, the people of Nicaragua had sacrificed themselves for the liberation of the country and subsequently were keen to help eradicate illiteracy. Relying on an apparently high level of public commitment, the government mounted the crusade in the face of the dire scarcity of resources (Torres, 1990).

Although Nicaragua lacked an adequate amount of resources, some of the needs were fulfilled through a combination of private and international contributions (Torres, 1991). The international contribution helped meet such requirements as clothes, lanterns, boots, raincoats, basic food stuff and teaching materials (Gander, 1983). Various countries including Cuba, China, and Tanzania provided assistance in different ways.

## Discussion

Following a war which ravaged the socio-economic life of the people, the Sandanista government committed itself to national reconstruction. Towards this end, the importance of human development was emphasized, and to achieve this the first task of the government was to develop human capabilities through literacy and popular education.

### Accomplishments

Nicaragua's literacy crusade was a singularly impressive initiative because it was launched during the first year of a revolutionary regime and reduced the illiteracy rate dramatically, from more than 50 percent to 25 percent of the population over ten years of age. Mounting a follow-up campaign in the indigenous languages of Miskito, Sumo, and Creole English extended literacy skills to another 12,664 people (Arnove & Dewees, 1991; Arnove, 1988; Arnove, 1987; Arnove, 1986). This strategy helped to bridge the social and cultural gap between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

Other achievements included the involvement of students as literacy workers, integration of the rural population into national life, improvement of women's social and economic status and the consolidation of mass organizations. Similarly, the crusade was instrumental in utilizing a new model of social change characterized by decentralization of decision making powers to the grassroots level. It also demonstrated that communities' own efforts and those attempted in cooperation with the government could best serve the society. The crusade identified the need for expanding national services such as health care and the supply of basic consumer necessities in areas where these services were unknown prior to the operation of the campaign (Arnove & Dewees, 1991). People's awareness of the value of education increased and, consequently, the formal system was expanded. The increased demand for education also prompted a rapid expansion of nonformal and popular education (Arnove, 1988).

The popular education strategy helped accelerate learning activities in communities. Many of the educationally disadvantaged people, including youths and children, were provided with learning opportunities. Drawing on the philosophy that "it is the people who educate the people" (Grigsby, 1985, p. 73), the graduates of the literacy crusade were involved in working as teacher-animators of popular education (Arnove, 1988). This teaching force contributed to helping approximately 190,000 Nicaraguans become literate (Arnove, 1988). There was also the initiative at the regional level to decide, develop and implement contextually relevant learning programs. The achievement made by the province of Rio San Juan in terms of declaring itself as a illiteracy free region in 1987 was an outstanding example (Arrien, 1990).

Above all, the literacy crusade was crucial to achieving a new political culture geared towards a common cause and the common good (Torres, 1991). It challenged fragmentation by the attempt towards "meeting of opposites: city kids with country people, intellectual with manual work, independence with discipline, traditional thought patterns with revolutionary new ideas" (Hirshon & Butler, 1983, p. 62). Moreover, the people enjoyed opportunities to come out of cultural backwardness and develop a sense of self-respect and dignity (Gander, 1983). In sum, Arnove (1987) presented a comprehensive view of achievements as stated below:

> the literacy crusade played a critical role in helping to overcome the inequities between countryside and city, males and females, the Atlantic and the Pacific coasts. It contributed to the mobilization and induction of previously marginal population -- peasantry and women, the youth and the aged -- into new roles related to national reconstruction. (p. 291)

## Challenges

The literacy crusade and the follow-up popular education program also faced numerous challenges. In particular, ideological content was overemphasized, thereby limiting other important areas of learning closely linked to basic development needs of people (Rojo, 1984). Torres (1991) expressed similar ideas by explaining that the crusade was largely a political project which placed excessive demand on people to participate in multiple national and revolutionary tasks. Structural arrangements framed to carry them out began to resemble formal schooling with bureaucratic, centralized and credentialing characteristics. There arose a conflict between people who favored determining their own goals and course of action and the vanguard which developed a tendency to impose prescriptions as if they knew the best thing for the people. In addition, there were also conflicts between opposing forces: the traditionalists and revolutionaries (Torres, 1989). This state of affairs made it "open to debate whether or not the actual pedagogy employed fostered critical consciousness or top-down indoctrination" (Arnove, 1987, p. 277).

Despite the emphasis on group interaction as an important approach to learning, the mechanical approach became predominant because the participants, who were comprised of low income rural people and generally submerged into the culture of silence, had inhibitions to be extrovert (Arnove, 1987). Moreover, the issue of teachers' knowledge and skills were also held responsible for the emergence of the mechanistic literacy activities. The extent to which they were trained was fairly inadequate to promote the participative approach to learning (Arnove, 1987).

The literacy achievement which was made during the campaign started to decline as a result of high dropout and burn out rates (Arnove & Dewees, 1991). Reasons behind this included anti-Sandinista attack on literacy workers along with literacy and health centres, the problem of relevance in learning, especially in gaining tangible benefits helpful in meeting basic life needs and the lack of physical equipment. Moreover, the crusade was tightly scheduled which constrained it timewise and resourcewise. The entire attention was focused at meeting the quantitative target. This reality brought into question the quality and utility of the learning (Arnove & Dewees, 1991).

Although the goal of the revolution was two-pronged -- emancipation from an oppressive regime and economic development -- the national literacy crusade and popular basic education as the major sequel to the revolution were influenced by political and ideological factors. This may have reflected, in part, an emotional expression of the government associated with the success of the revolution. However, the external threats to which Nicaragua was subjected at the time probably also had an impact on educational policies. As a result of these influences, the prospect of evolving a development-oriented integrated framework of nonformal adult education, with a balanced focus on conscientization, human resource development and rural development, which would have contributed to realizing the overall goals of the revolution, diminished.

The revolution heightened people's radical emotion, and this permeated even the development of learning materials. Those outside of the revolutionary process opposed the radical leaning in the operation of the crusade. In addition, during the initial stage of the crusade the non-Spanish speaking people were left out. Later when they were invited to join the program, they showed their displeasure resulting in a low participation rate.

To a disappointing degree, the crusade overlooked the need for valuing everyone's sentiments, needs and expectations in consideration of social, economic, political and cultural diversities (Sanders, 1983). The crusade was a massive effort to indoctrinate people, was not concerned with sectorial and geographical differences, and was fairly monolithic in nature (Arnove & Dewees, 1991). Reflecting on the problems of the literacy crusade, Campos (1985) stated:

> The concept and methodology...of the Literacy Crusade...have been contaminated by academia in the curriculum and formalism...It was our intention to develop a motivating, flexible and creative methodology that would trigger and empower the transformation of an inherited social structure with a core curriculum that would adapt itself to the different social sectors with their own specific political, cultural and production characteristics. (p. 59)

### Implications

The high adult illiteracy rate in many countries is believed to be a major barrier to development. The Nicaraguan experiences, both in terms of achievements and problems, have implications for other countries with similar challenges.

If literacy is to be recognized as the human cornerstone of national development, not only in terms of "increased economic production but also for the new opportunities and responsibilities for civic, social and political participation" (Bhola, 1983, p. 194), then it is absolutely necessary to have a strong political will to eradicate illiteracy. Any nation which is committed to developing the people through educational support, must try to acquire resources from the socially and educationally privileged populace. Their involvement may be obtained by making them feel that they have a strong obligation to the nation. Furthermore, those countries, including Nicaragua, which have mounted literacy crusades have acquired substantial support from external sources, since the internal resources were limited. This clearly suggests that once the commitment is made, necessary financial and other support must be solicited from all possible sources.

The revolution in Nicaragua was an important factor for restructuring and creating a favorable ground for mounting the literacy crusade within a very short time frame. There was a major initiative to eliminate illiteracy as quick as possible. In order to ensure an effective outcome from the initiative, the administrative, logistical and pedagogical management needed adequate attention.

A reflection on this situation reminds organizers of the need not to be emotionally driven on the ground of the revolution for undertaking as massive a task such as the literacy crusade. Systematic and well thought out steps would be more effective in sustaining quality and minimizing conflict. Another important point relates to the revolutionary context as a prerequisite for the success of a literacy crusade. Revolution is not a common phenomenon but occurs at some point in the historical process. When and how it does occur is not definite. But it is definite that the current reality of economically backward countries with nonrevolutionary contexts represents a serious barrier to eradicating illiteracy. Consequently, the question is whether these countries should engage in revolution in order to prepare the ground for eliminating illiteracy or strive for an incremental approach to dealing with the problem. In many contexts, the latter strategy may be more appropriate.

A literacy crusade oriented towards national reconstruction and development has implications for pedagogy. The pedagogy must focus on dealing with the basic development needs of people and employ the methods which generate a new consciousness in them related to the acquisition of creative, cooperative, analytic and productive capabilities. The instructional materials must reflect the reality and the lifestyles of the participants. National coordination must be strong to increase the potential benefits from the program. Field workers must identify themselves with the people whom they are going to serve. Their abilities to effectively conduct the program must be promoted with a well thought out training strategy (Bhola, 1983).

The Nicaraguan experience provides important ideas related to the need for giving emphasis to the common interests and goals of all segments of the society rather than augmenting the objectives of the class struggle. In order to address people's common interests and goals, professionals have a role to focus on the existing reality. In contrast, the dominant influence of the politically conflicting forces of radicals and traditionalists on program design and implementation would tend to foster indoctrination rather than real improvement.

The Nicaraguan experience suggests that involvement of people in analyzing their past and present would develop their insight for a better life (Rojo, 1984). There may be no controversy over this idea because this process may be helpful to people in shaping their future. However, simply involving people in the metaphysical analysis of the past and present may not enable them to bring about a real change in their circumstances. For the achievement of a better future, people's actions are essential; contemplation and imagination alone will not actualize the desired reality. In order to put people into action, development of skills and knowledge is important along with resource support in terms of equipment and raw materials. A country may need not only consciousness-raising or skill development oriented nonformal adult education programs but also those which embrace action.

## Summary

The success of the Sandanista-led revolution against the dynastic Somoza regime opened a new horizon of national reconstruction in Nicaragua. Immediately after the revolution, in recognition of the potential contribution of literate masses to national development, the government mounted a literacy crusade. The major goal of the crusade was to make the illiterate population critically aware, socially active, economically productive, and culturally enriched. The government enlisted all available resources, for instance, human power, government structures, and local talents and skills for the achievement of the goal. Support from outside was also enlisted. Despite the numerous problems that were faced the crusade was able to achieve some positive outcomes, and the illiteracy rate was significantly reduced. However, both the achievements and problems provide some insight that might help other countries similar to Nicaragua to attack poverty through nonformal adult education.

# CHAPTER 7

# NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Nonformal education, as an approach to learning, has been in existence in Nepal for a very long time. However, its importance as a potential learning strategy to serve the educational needs of the disadvantaged masses has been recognized only since the 1950s. An attempt is made in this chapter to review the historical development of nonformal adult education as well as to describe the current situation. The overview is presented in three sections. The first section describes four successive phases in the development of nonformal education; the second section provides an overview of the current framework with respect to programmatic, administrative and logistical arrangements; and the third section focuses on achievements and challenges as well as needs for the future.

## Phases of Nonformal Adult Education

The development of nonformal adult education in Nepal may be described in terms of a number of different phases. Four different phases have been identified by researchers (Aryal, 1970; Koirala, 1988) who examined the nature, methods and objectives of nonformal adult education activities at different points in time. Each successive phase -- indigenous, expansional, reconstruction, and modern -- reflects a change in the form of nonformal education.

### Indigenous Phase

The indigenous phase, which covered a lengthy period from ancient times to the late 1940s, was marked by religious fervor and a sense of philanthropy. Religious institutes such as *Gurukul, Devakul, Rajkul* and *Rishikul* were established by the Aryans. Since access to these places was strictly limited, religious rituals and spiritual practices along with a limited amount of literacy component were taught only to select people. Similarly, the Buddhists established *Gumpas* and the Muslims set up *Madarasas* as centres of learning.

Nonformal adult education activities conducted in these institutions was heavily loaded with an element of mysticism and religious discipline; an emphasis was placed on leading a life of sacrifice, detachment and devotion. Preaching was the dominant mode of instruction for making people aware of the value and importance of religion and spiritualism. Religious ceremonies and rituals dominated the approach to learning. Furthermore, the aim of learning was focused on developing in the participants skills, knowledge, values and attitudes which were necessary for sustaining life rather than for bringing about social change. Facilities for learning arrangements still exist in these institutes on a limited scale, though they cater to a small segment of the population who hold firmly to religious beliefs.

Various dynasties such as the *Kiratis*, the *Lichhavis* from the late 3rd century to the 13th century AD, the *Mallas* from the late 13th century to the mid-17th century AD, ruled over Nepal. The *Shah* dynasty has continued in power since the 17th century. The state under each dynasty gave limited priority to educating people. According to Sharma (1986), even the progressive Lichhavi regime did not appear to be enthusiastic about providing education for the common people. The Malla kings who succeeded the Lichhavi dynasty were preoccupied with strife and conflicts with their neighboring principalities. As a result, neither the indigenous educational system nor other potential strategies for learning evolved in Nepal (Pant, 1984). The earlier Shah rulers also made no impressive move to spread education (Aryal, 1970). Some rulers were busy in waging wars and others had their obsession with their own lifestyles; consequently, education was neglected for many centuries.

### Expansional Phase

The indigenous phase was supplanted by the expansional phase which started with the dawn of democracy in 1950 and continued for about a decade. The foundation of this phase was laid by the oligarchic rule of the Ranas who seized power from the Shah rulers and controlled the state affairs for 104 years. They were aware that the force of an education which could produce questioning minds could topple them from power. Consequently, the idea of universal education was viewed as a threat and rejected, the traditional learning systems were not allowed to develop, and illiteracy was considered advantageous for consolidating power (Uprety, 1962; Aryal, 1970; New Era, 1984).

While trying desperately to consolidate their power by restricting educational opportunities for the general masses, the Ranas presented themselves as being liberal. The wave of change which was sweeping over the region prompted them to initiate an adult education program in 1947 which was to be the first of its kind in the country. In this program, school teachers and secondary school students were mobilized to work in nonformal education. Eventually, however, the Ranas were dethroned in 1950 and this provided Nepal with the opportunity to join the outside world. This change led to, among others, the expansion of nonformal adult education through the adoption of new ideas and technologies. Steps were taken to widen the scope of education through the incorporation of various content areas and involvement of various personnel in the operation of the program.

Operated initially in religious institutions, the nonformal adult education program received an impetus during the latter part of the 1940s when it was placed within the school structure. In the early 1950s, the program was made as an integral part of the then rural development strategy known as the *Tribhuvan Village Development Program*. This turning point made it possible to operate nonformal education outside of the school network. Personnel who had basic education or at least literacy skills were employed as catalysts in promoting rural development activities.

The expansional phase marked a turning point in the operation of the nonformal adult education activities. Extension programs in the health and agriculture sectors were introduced with a view to helping people understand the problems in these areas and providing them with the means to resolve them. School facilities such as materials and personnel were mobilized and local youths were involved in the program. Technical training institutes offered training opportunities for promoting occupational skills. An attempt was initiated to develop a new framework for the nonformal adult education program aimed at meeting the basic needs of the people.

## Reconstruction Phase

The reconstruction phase ranged from the late 1950s to the early 1970s. Various development programs tended to include nonformal adult education as an important component. This has continued as a normal practice when integrated rural development projects are designed. In the latter part of the 1970s, concerns were expressed about the need to make nonformal adult education a more functional and effective instrument for achieving development goals. Technical and financial help became available from friendly countries and donor agencies. Numerous experts came to Nepal to provide consultancy services, and some of them worked as project implementers. The country's needs and its receptivity succeeded in attracting donor countries to undertake or to support various integrated rural development activities.

The approaches adopted in the expansion phase underwent a process of consolidation in the reconstruction phase. Mass media such as radio and films were increasingly used, and discussion forums were organized to help raise people's awareness level. In addition, higher education students were involved in an expanded operation of the program. Attempts were also made to increase skill learning opportunities through the technical institutes in the fields of agriculture, health and cottage industries. Meanwhile, concerns about the implementation of a literacy campaign were being expressed which led the educational planners to reflect on the past attempts at educational planning in Nepal and to design a new workable plan.

The political change of 1950 was significant with respect to initiatives in educational planning. Various educational reform agencies, for example, the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (Pande, & Wood, 1954), the All-Round National Education

Committee (MOEC, 1961), the Wood and Knall Commission (Wood & Knall, 1962), the National Education System Plan (MOEC, 1971), and the Education for All (MOEC, 1985) were instituted with a view to analyzing functional and structural aspects of education and recommending strategies for improvement. One of the areas which continued to be stressed was nonformal adult education as a strategy for rural transformation. This area has not been overlooked in any of the educational plans.

The report of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission (Pande, K. C., & Wood, 1954) was the first report of its kind in which there was a focus on the importance of adult literacy. Various recommendations were made such as conducting a six month literacy course followed by self-education, imparting extensive education rather than mere literacy, achieving universal compulsory literacy by 1975, and ensuring universal availability of a complete adult education package. In addition, quantitative targets for different phases were also proposed with a view to reaching increasing numbers of illiterate adults.

In the pursuit of making education more relevant to the needs of the country, another high level body known as the All-Round National Education Committee (MOEC, 1961) was formed. This committee also proposed various measures of reform in the field of adult literacy. In addition to supporting adult literacy activities, the need for a post-literacy scheme with the provision for an adequate supply of learning materials was stressed. The urgency for the quantitative expansion of adult literacy activities was highlighted, and the potential contribution of social workers and organizers in promoting the program was emphasized.

A Unesco team (Wood & Knall, 1962) prepared a report on developing education in Nepal. Adult literacy was an important component of the recommendations. In order to make the program more relevant to the needs of illiterate people, the team suggested including agriculture, health, homemaking, and industrial extension in the learning program activities.

A new focus on nonformal adult education emerged with the inception of the National Education System Plan (MOEC, 1971). Basically, three major components -- knowledge, information and skill -- were stressed in the development and operation of the adult education program. The intent of this plan, among others, was to make adult education more functional and needs-responsive. As a result, learning materials related to various immediate needs of the rural reality were produced. Moreover, action research projects were conducted with the objective of testing new methods and materials.

### Modern Phase

In the modern phase, which covers the entire decade of 1980s and the early 1990s, nonformal adult education programs have focused on raising participants' awareness level, productivity, knowledge and self-reliance to meet various needs and resolve problems. In addition, the potential of nongovernment organizations for achieving these objectives has also been recognized. Furthermore, such income generating programs as *Small Farmer Development* and *Production Credit for Rural Women* recognize the value of nonformal adult education.

In the decade of the 1980s, new development ideas were tested in developing nations like Nepal. As a result, nonformal adult education became a concern of most of the agencies which were responsible for undertaking social and economic development programs. For example, in order to facilitate loan-flows banks have added a literacy as well as a social service component to their activities. Different organizations -- especially adults' and women's organizations -- of the former Panchayat political system became involved in conducting literacy program consonant with meeting their political ends. Similarly, various affiliated organizations of the United Nations sponsored innovative projects in this field. In general, a multitude of social and economic development agencies, both in the government and nongovernment sectors, have supported the development of nonformal adult education.

These positive signs of the development of nonformal adult education led to the decision to launch a campaign to reduce the illiteracy rate among adults and to make them functionally competent through skill training (National Education Committee, 1987). Various social and political organizations including government officials became involved in carrying out the plan. Emphasis was placed on producing and supplying adequate learning materials and on generating effective program operation strategies by conducting research activities. In general, the literacy campaign seems to be focusing on bringing down illiteracy to a minimum level by the turn of the century.

The modern phase of nonformal adult education continues to emphasize the need for increased utilization of mass media and extension services. The intent was to give further impetus to raising the awareness level of the people, expanding the operation of functional literacy as well as promoting income-generation activities. The importance of post-literacy programs and the need for producing follow-up learning materials were recognized. Similarly, participants were better informed about the roles and responsibilities of various delivery agencies and, subsequently, better oriented as to how to approach these agencies and gain access to their services. More importantly, innovative projects were conducted with the objective of discovering effective program operation strategies which would help empower illiterate adults educationally, socially, and economically.

Over the course of time, nonformal adult education programs in Nepal have received progressive treatment. In recognition of the needs and problems of people, attempts have been made to develop the program by focusing on such elements as making people aware of their existing realities, involving them in analyzing such realities through group dynamics, and imparting literacy and productive skills which would enable them to improve the quality of their lives.

## Current Framework of Nonformal Adult Education

A description of current nonformal adult education in Nepal as regards various aspects such as participants and the types of program, materials and methods, funding sources, monitoring and supervision, and operational strategies will serve as a background for considering possible future developments in later chapters.

### Participants and Programs

Generally, nonformal education is intended for disadvantaged people who, because of their adverse social and economic conditions, remain outside of the formal system. In the Nepalese context, people who are influenced by such factors as rugged topography, cultural taboos, resource constraints, deficient management skills, lack of knowledge, and inability to effectively communicate are regarded as the disadvantaged. Different reports (CERID, 1989; MOEC, 1990; MOEC, 1991) have identified 43 ethnic groups living in different parts of the country as disadvantaged. Various organizations involved in the operation of nonformal adult education program have made attempts to reach most of these people; however, the entire disadvantaged population has not been reached.

Six broad types of nonformal adult education programs that are in operation in Nepal have been identified (MOEC, 1991). The first type is the alternate formal education type which offers learning opportunities especially for unschooled girls and other youngsters. The *Chelibeti Program* which includes girls in the 6 to 14 age group who are not in school and the *Shiksha Sadan Program*, literally known as community learning centre, which involves educationally deprived youths in learning activities are examples of this type (CERID, 1986). The second is the adult literacy type which includes functional literacy components. Similarly, the third type relates to awareness-raising in which programs such as civic education, legal literacy and population education are included. The fourth is the extension education type in which agriculture extension, health extension and environmental extension activities are conducted. The fifth is the skill training type under which literacy as well as short and long term training and skill linkage programs are operated. Finally, the community development type of nonformal education focuses on disseminating information, mobilizing services offered by several organizations and conducting literacy as well as income generating activities.

Each type of nonformal education focuses on specific areas of learning. Usually, nonformal adult education programs are designed in terms of one of these types; only limited attention has been given to the potential of integrating different types within a comprehensive framework.

The post literacy program is an important aspect of nonformal education. Even though there are concerns to promote post literacy activities, very little has been done in this regard. Therefore, attempts need to be made for effective operation through the establishment of community reading centres and village libraries as well as for providing follow up arrangements for skill training.

### Materials and Methods

Literacy primers and some post-literacy reading materials produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture are being widely used in nonformal education activities. According to a USAID (1988) report, some 18 agencies involved in the program use these materials. Some agencies have developed literacy primers and post-literacy reading materials for their own programs (World Education, 1990; USAID, 1988). The themes of these materials are basically in line with the curriculum model developed by Unesco for Asia and the Pacific Region (UNESCO, 1988). The literacy and post-literacy materials include such areas as health, nutrition and sanitation, environmental education, agriculture, population education, community development, family life education, income-generation, and women's rights. A general analysis reveals that an emphasis has been placed on producing thematically diverse materials so as to relate them to the basic needs of the people.

In terms of implementation, six different ways are used for conveying messages to the participants. These include pictorial discussion, experience sharing, lecture, group discussion, primer reading and comprehension, and practical work. In addition, agencies such as the United Mission to Nepal, and Save the Children/USA, organize excursion tours to various project sites in order to help adults learn through visits. Nonformal adult education programs in Nepal lack modern technology for use in the process of delivering messages. Extensive research with different strategies aimed at enriching indigenous learning and facilitating clear communication with participants have not been carried out.

### Funding Sources

External assistance constitutes the major source of funding for nonformal adult education in Nepal. With respect to internal sources, the participants bear the labor and opportunity costs while the government allocates a small proportion of the national budget. The government has never imposed a tax in order to generate resources internally for nonformal education, nor has it made any attempt to mobilize potential indigenous sources. The shrinking economy of the country has narrowed the scope for generating internal funds. Consequently, the need for seeking foreign assistance has increased. In the current situation there are a number of international agencies -- UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, ADB, CIDA, Save the children/USA, Lutheran World Service, Oxfam -- that offer financial aid for the operation of nonformal adult education activities. Basically, resources provided by external agencies are used in training literacy personnel, developing literacy primers and post-literacy materials and meeting various administrative, technical and managerial expenses.

### Monitoring and Supervision

Wherever possible professionals are appointed to supervise and monitor the nonformal adult education program. In remote areas, nonprofessionals -- village heads, village development workers, extension workers and administrators --may be involved in in this process. Involvement of nonprofessionals in supervising and monitoring activities is another deficiency of the program. According to New ERA (1984), the weak supervision system in the nonformal adult education program is a reflection of the quality and competence of the personnel assigned to this task. Even the so-called professional supervisors lack adequate academic background and have limited technical skills for carrying out the task. Supervisor training is a grossly neglected area (New ERA, 1989).

### Operational Strategies

Four different networks may be identified with respect to operationalizing nonformal adult education in Nepal. These include (a) a line agency network consisting of various government ministries, (b) networks established under such development programs as *Integrated Rural Development Project* and *Small Farmer Development Project*, (c) networks designed under *Basic Services for Local Development Program*, and (d) isolated pocket program networks such as USC/Canada, Save the Children/USA, and the Nonformal Education Service Centre program. The operational strategy in terms of program focus and approach related to each of these networks is presented in Table 4.

As is suggested by the outline in Table 4, all organizations' activities are oriented toward conducting programs that tend to address literacy, awareness and skill development needs, mainly with an emphasis on promoting the target groups' living conditions. The potential of nonformal adult education programs in helping people perceive reality critically in order to deal with socio-economic contradictions seems to have been diluted.

## Discussion

The nonformal adult education program in Nepal is characterized by a combination of both achievements and challenges. Although the program has contributed to making illiterate adults literate, aware, and skilled, numerous problems and constraints prevail which need to be addressed.

Table 4

Nonformal Adult Education Operation Strategies

| Program Network | Focus | Approach |
|---|---|---|
| Government Line Agencies | Awareness-raising | Bureaucratic decision |
| | Information dissemination | Bureau-technocratic planning |
| | Literacy | Central instruction for field operation |
| | | Encouraging field staff to engage in rural development activities |
| | | Efforts to seek support from rural/urban elites |
| | | Bureau-technocratic encouragement given to rural/urban elites to undertake development work |
| | | Masses as consumers |
| | | Holding of consultation committee meetings |
| Integrated Rural Development | Functional literacy | Base line survey by technocrats/researchers |
| | Skill training | Program design on the basis of survey findings |
| | | Training of elites for program operation |
| | | Masses as consumers |
| Basic Services for Local Development | Needs based literacy | Bureaucratic decision |
| | | Technocratic planning |
| | Information on basic skills | Administrative consultancies |
| | Skills training | Network cultivation for desirable skill training |
| | | Bureau-technocratic encouragement to involve rural-urban elites |
| Project Network | Learning of various life related subjects | Bureau-technocratic program decision through baseline survey |
| | | Shared planning with program beneficiaries |
| | | Effort to institutionalize activities |

## Achievements

With reference to achievements, nonformal adult education programs have been an important component of national educational plans. In every educational plan, attention has been given to the improvement and expansion of nonformal adult education. Second, numerous research projects have been undertaken to identify new methods and materials. Third, concerns have been expressed with regard to the need for including diverse learning areas so as to make the program more relevant and responsive to basic needs. In essence, the nonformal adult education program has been recognized as an instrument for achieving development. Although nonformal adult education has not made a substantial impact on the improvement of the educational, political, economic and social status of disadvantaged people, the program has made a modest impact on the life of the participants. Some attempts have been made to assess the impact of nonformal adult education and to identify possibilities for improvement.

A number of research organizations and researchers (LCRC, 1984; CERID, 1986; RIDA, 1986; Koirala, 1988; New ERA, 1989; Gurung, Huntington, & Pande, 1989; NCCE, 1990; MOEC, 1991) have conducted evaluation studies of nonformal adult education activities in Nepal. These studies have revealed that some of the nonformal adult education programs have been helpful particularly to develop participants' knowledge and skill relating to the use of forest resources, better agricultural practices, health habits, nutrition and income generating activities. A significant change in their individual life styles and the surrounding environment has yet to materialize.

Because of the exposure to education, the participants of nonformal adult education programs have tended to realize the importance of education for children. According to current statistics, the national literacy rate has gone up to 39 percent (MOEC, 1991). Most of the children of those who participated in nonformal adult education programs are enrolled in schools indicating that these participants have been motivated to give their children an education. However, those who are young and energetic have felt that the scope of learning in nonformal adult education programs is quite limited.

Illiterate adults usually learn through oral communication with the local priests, village elites and extension workers. They have hardly any knowledge of the written word. But with the acquisition of the knowledge of reading and writing as a result of participation in nonformal adult education programs, the participants have been introduced to the world of letters. The need, however, is to reduce the high illiteracy rate. A study conducted to evaluate the literacy achievement of the participants in some project areas revealed that only 23 per cent achieved full literacy status while 29 percent had partial literacy (New ERA, 1989).

## Challenges

The nonformal adult education program in Nepal faces various challenges as a consequence of a multitude of problems associated with different aspects. Problems and constraints range from the policy to the implementation level (CERID, 1985; Koirala, 1988; World Education, 1990). They include a lack of proper vision in policy formulation; lack of efforts to share experiences, resources and expertise; a muddling through approach to the organization and operation of the program; lack of personnel training; lack of dedication to work on the part of the facilitators and supervisors; sketchy management of post-literacy activities; lack of comparative studies between and among program implementing agencies; lack of needs-responsive materials, and inadequate resource allocation. A number of other problems exist such as the failure to utilize the research outcome to develop an effective program framework; lack of building broader professional structure; lack of establishing operationally effective coordination; and lack of visioning in the development of an all-encompassing framework of nonformal adult education to make it a catalyst in dealing with the basic needs of the poor.

The participants in the nonformal adult education program seem to have very little say, and their views and problems appear to be taken for granted by both the government and development agencies. Local leaders are simply expected to follow the directions given by the program agencies. They function mainly as agents by helping to introduce the program in a particular place. In the absence of joint decision making and planning on the basis of mutual sharing of ideas and experiences, the program seems to be imposed. The operational strategies of nonformal adult education in Nepal are predominantly characterized by a top-down process of management and implementation.

These problems have persisted over the years but the initiative to take action has not materialized. Such a lack of government action may have been due to a desire to maintain the status quo, thereby suppressing people's energy to change. Considering this possibility, a new commitment to invigorating nonformal adult education programs appears to be necessary.

Undoubtedly, the involvement of various organizations in the field of nonformal education should be regarded as a positive sign. But certain self-centred motives may have been behind the involvement of these organizations, notwithstanding that the primary concern probably was to help illiterate people. Organizations founded on a particular political base would like to see the participants groomed into their own political philosophy and those founded on the economic base would orient them to fulfill prescribed economic activities. Similarly, bureaucratic organizations of the government sector may attempt to meet quantitative targets while innovative projects may be ignored due to the lack of political will. As a result of the absence of a strong political commitment coupled with relatively low resource allocation, action focused on program improvement has lagged.

Based on evaluative studies, various recommendations have been proposed for more effective program implementation but in most cases they have been disregarded. As a result, the importance of research has been devalued. More importantly, the adoption of a fragmentary approach to program design has impeded the development of a comprehensive framework for nonformal adult education programs. Sometimes more emphasis is placed on providing literacy skills and at other times skill development or awareness raising components are emphasized. But an integration of all these components of the program has been overlooked. Despite the involvement of a large number of organizations in this field, program effectiveness in terms of improving the quality of life of illiterate people does not have an encouraging record.

According to the literacy campaign document (National Education Committee, 1987), there will be 15 million adults within 15-45 age group by the year 2000 who will have to be provided with learning opportunities through nonformal adult education programs. For this purpose, an expanded operation is necessary. In order to make 70 thousand people literate each year (USAID, 1988), roughly 21 years will have to be spent to reach the 15 million needy people. By that time some more needy people will appear. Therefore, more national efforts as well as international support will be necessary to respond to this increasing demand for education. At present about 50 organizations are involved in nonformal adult education programs under the sponsorship of many international agencies (CERID, 1985; World Education 1990; MOEC, 1991).

Along with the quantitative expansion of the program, its effectiveness also needs to be improved. Low effectiveness appears to be a common phenomenon in the Nepalese context. According to one report (New ERA, 1989), the efficiency ratio of a literacy program as reflected in the completion rate was about 58 percent. The proportion of those who achieved literacy status -- including both the fully and semi-literate numbers -- was 45 percent, and the achievement level of nearly one-fourth of the total participants was too low for them to be considered literate. The problems of efficiency and effectiveness of the nonformal adult education program in Nepal remain as continuing challenges.

## Summary

Nonformal adult education activities in Nepal have undergone a number of successive phases, each of which manifested some new characteristics. The religion-centred indigenous phase passed through the expansional and reconstruction phases, eventually coming into the modern phase which attempts to address the real life situation of adults. With each progressive move, there emerged the need for widening the scope of the program professionally, administratively, logistically and operationally. Consequently, there was an increased involvement of various institutions in the operation of the program, varied types of materials were produced, learning areas were diversified, and the initiative was taken to expand the target groups. Although nonformal education has had some positive impact on the expansion of literacy, several problems have impeded an effective promotion of the program in terms of bringing about real improvement in the lives of participants. This reality necessitates reconsideration of the program and making the necessary commitments to fulfilling participants' needs.

# CHAPTER 8

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES IN NEPAL

One of the objectives of the study was to identify policy makers' perceptions of nonformal adult education. This was prompted by the need to focus on the prevailing ideas in addition to literature-based information presented in Chapter Seven. Accordingly, the views of personnel engaged in the development of policies about nonformal adult education and rural development in Nepal are presented in this chapter. Specifically, the chapter includes sections on rural development needs, barriers to rural development, impact of current policies and programs related to nonformal adult education, effective strategies and policy recommendations. The nine people who responded to questions in relation to these areas included two policy makers, three senior administrators, two program directors, and two nonformal education teachers who are identified here as "educators". Responses were translated from Nepali into English by the researcher.

## Development Needs of Rural Areas

Six of the respondents stated that without making people aware of the problems they faced, one could not decide on what they really needed for improving their living conditions. Therefore, they contended that raising the awareness level of the illiterate population is a major need for rural development. All of the respondents indicated that there is the need for making educational facilities accessible to the people. The respondents identified the need for female education as a prerequisite for rural transformation, since the status of women in rural communities is deplorable in every aspect of daily life.

Another need for rural development, which all respondents identified, was that of developing socially and economically gainful skills among rural illiterates. Economically viable skills would include various vocations and trades such as agriculture, livestock, carpentry, masonry, dress-making, pottery, wood carving, and many others. Similarly, learning skills in such areas as health care, sanitation, nutrition, homemaking, child care, family planning, and environmental protection would be important in improving the social and personal lives of rural illiterates. They believed that these skills were necessary to increase efficiency and productivity of rural people which would help them to become self-reliant.

Four of the respondents from the categories of policy makers, administrators and educators emphasized the need for raising the level of employment opportunities and income-generation activities in rural areas. They also indicated that establishment of agro-based, small scale and cottage industries which used locally available materials and human resources would serve the purpose. One of the program directors stated that income-generation would also be possible through diversifying rural products and creating market facilities for these products. He stated:

> Skill training to the participants should be in areas which have potential to produce different goods and services. The marketing prospects for diverse products will be wider for which marketing facilities are also essential. The local initiative is necessary for organizing this matter.

Furthermore, a few respondents observed that rural people would have to develop skills in using appropriately and conserving the natural resources available in their surroundings. In addition, they also stressed that people's concern must be raised in relation to the benefit of consuming only those resources which are needed for meeting their requirements and of emphasizing conservation for the future. Restrictions on random abuse of natural resources by political power holders and other privileged people through the organized force of the rural people is another important need.

In the views of all of the respondents, constructive ideas of the participants pertaining to fulfilling their basic development needs should be translated into reality with the support of physical inputs. This strategy would motivate them to take the initiative for undertaking various development activities. They also stressed that establishment of health services centres as well as the development of basic infrastructure such as transportation, communication and rural electrification were important for the improvement of the rural economy. The policy personnel felt that rural development programs would not materialize unless various agencies engaged in meeting their respective objectives by involving the intended beneficiaries in carrying out development projects. In this connection, one of the educators asserted that it would be increasingly important to involve the target groups in order to assess their real and urgent needs while designing development programs. He felt that adoption of this strategy would result, first, in increasing their access to various services, and second, in promoting their continued involvement in development programs.

Improvement in agricultural productivity was another area which all respondents emphasized. In this connection, they saw potential for agro-based small scale industries and application of improved techniques of cultivation with effective operation of extension services. Furthermore, six of the respondents expressed the view that services of existing delivery agencies should be more rural-oriented. Basic services such as safe drinking water, health services, housing facilities, and educational and employment opportunities must reach rural people. In general there was a need for redesigning overall development strategies inclined more towards rural development.

Since the needs of communities vary considerably from place to place and from time to time, the potential for overlooking priority needs of communities is always present. In this context, one of the educators stated that promotion of local autonomy would help to identify priority needs and to work out strategies for dealing with them.

Most of the respondents viewed that learning needs of rural illiterate masses, mainly those of illiterate adults, women and out-of-school-children, must be met through the expanded operation of nonformal adult education and nonformal primary education. One policy maker stated:

> The existing formal system is constrained in terms of reaching the illiterate masses. So, there must be a real political commitment to offer them an easy access to learning through accelerating the currently initiated nonformal education campaign.

## Barriers to Rural Development

The development model followed by Nepal was viewed as a critical barrier to rural development. In this context, the educators stated that the present development model of the country was inclined more towards developing urban areas which were considered as pivotal centres, and most development activities clustered around them. As a consequence, rural areas existed as the periphery of urban centres, and rural resources were gradually consumed in efforts to fulfill the requirements for urban development. Rural people were economically disadvantaged and, therefore, marginalized, because they lacked productive skills and could not access credit facilities.

The respondents outlined various obstacles and hindrances that acted as road blocks on the way to rural development. They viewed pervasive ignorance and mass illiteracy as the major barriers. These problems blocked access to power of the rural masses and restricted their participation in development activities. Furthermore, they stated that lack of information and technical knowledge were other problems. An acute shortage of media and other facilities restricted the exposure of rural masses to new knowledge and basic information. Given the paucity of skill training centres, efforts to impart technical, vocational and life-related skills have been generally unsuccessful. Consequently, rural areas faced the problem of acquiring a skilled workforce with technical competence. This problem has limited the possibility of achieving development through the people themselves. In addition, semi-skilled or skilled people from rural areas tended to migrate to urban areas and abroad, with the hope of finding improved economic and educational opportunities.

Another problem of rural development, identified by eight of the respondents in all categories, was the resource constraints in rural areas which impeded acceleration of development programs. Limited financial support from banks and credit institutions to rural people hampered their participation in entrepreneurial activities. In those areas where credit facilities were available, access of rural people to these facilities was negligible because they lacked skills to deal with the administrative procedures.

The same respondents also stated that the service of delivery agencies in the areas of water supply, forestry, veterinary, health, education, and agriculture did not reach the needy rural masses, primarily because the illiterate poor did not have the confidence and knowledge to access such services. Nor did the delivery agencies feel responsible for going to the people and providing them with assistance. Usually, the elites in rural areas made larger gains from whatever services were available by establishing close relationships with the authorities.

The respondents indicated that frequently the government conducted development projects in rural areas with the stated aim of improving the socio-economic conditions of the people in the area. But the expected impact of projects was not realized because there was no continuity after the termination of the project schedule. One of the main reasons for this shortcoming was alienation of the beneficiaries from the administrative process of the project. Opportunities to create a participatory environment, which is regarded as instrumental to the success of development projects, were missing. The respondents felt that institutional support to activate and sustain development projects with effective participation of the rural populace was lacking. Furthermore, they said that inadequate monitoring and supervision tended to reduce the potential impact of development projects.

Innovative plans and programs might lead to effective and practical ways for improving social and economic conditions of the poverty-stricken masses. But the tragedy in Nepal, as one of the educators remarked, was the hesitation and unwillingness of administrators to institutionalize innovative activities into the mainstream of administration. Consequently, innovations even if they were successful did not have much impact on rural development.

Seven of the respondents representative of all categories regarded centralization as another detrimental factor to meeting development needs. One of the educators said that as a result of the strong centralized administrative structure, the village and district level authorities could hardly make any decisions. In addition to this problem, one of the program directors observed:

> Centralization of economic, social and political opportunities in the capital city left little or no room for local autonomy. The importance of local autonomy for rural development was grossly neglected.

In the views of the respondents, policy makers in Nepal gave limited attention to understanding rural realities. Usually, they only made guesses as to the rural people's needs and problems. Those responsible for making policy seldom worked with people in order to diagnose what specific factors affected rural life. As a result, development plans and programs were decided on the basis of untested assumptions. Such a state of affairs suggests that a lack of commitment permeated every level of development administration, thereby diluting the rural development effort.

In regard to addressing rural people's problems, all of the respondents stressed the need for removing all of the obstacles that have been identified. They specifically said that an increase in the literacy rate was essential in order to be able to deal with these obstacles. In addition, unless learning was made relevant to addressing the needs of rural people, it would not serve as a catalyst for positive change. One of the components that would make nonformal education relevant, according to the respondents, was the teaching of vocational skills.

Three of the respondents felt that the practice of democracy would be necessary if positive outcomes were to be expected from any development programs. In this connection, one educator maintained that the present structure of society did not allow much room for improving the quality of rural life because exploitation and oppression were rampant in rural areas. In addition, other socio-economic evils such as poverty, naivety, sexual discrimination, untouchability, low productivity, lack of employment opportunities and fatalism exerted a negative impact that impeded the prospects for rural development.

The same respondent pointed out the need for examining critically the rural social structure, which permits sexual and ethnic discrimination, and various other exploitative processes. He also focused on the issue of social equity and proposed that social justice could not be achieved if the social structure did not stand on the foundation of equity. If there were no changes, social stratification would deepen and lead to oppressive processes and inefficient utilization of resources. Therefore, he felt that in order to emancipate rural illiterate people from deplorable social and economic conditions, steps must be taken to ensure equity in society. The spirit of equity, he added, would not only mean social equity but also cultural, political, economic, and environmental equity.

The same respondent also pointed out the importance of the human relationship factor whenever the question of development arose. He stated that society must achieve a new solidarity through redefinition and restructuring of the network of human relationships. This respondent did not expect any resolution of rural development problems given the perpetuation of the present evils in the social structure of Nepal. In concluding, he made a strong plea for changing the present social structure to create a more conducive environment for human development. However, he did not mention any strategies for redefining or restructuring the network of human relationships.

## Current Policies

Respondents held contradictory ideas regarding the policy orientation of nonformal adult education programs. Some noted that the government had adopted a rural development orientation while others had different perceptions. According to one of the respondents, literacy learning seemed to be the only goal of the state-sponsored nonformal adult education program. This appeared to be evident from the materials and methods in use, which were basically focused on literacy training. However, the literacy program, as four of the respondents from the categories of policy makers and administrators remarked, adopted the key-word approach and included various functional areas such as agriculture, health, sanitation, home economics, child care, and environment protection.

Although educational plans emphasized the need for making nonformal adult education increasingly relevant to the real life situation of the participants, no significant efforts were made at the operational level. In addition, there were no opportunities for the development of productive skills. Establishment of a few trade schools was meant to serve out-of-school youths. Although projects were implemented with the purpose of providing literacy and skill training, they were just piecemeal efforts considering the nationwide need for the program. Nongovernmental organizations, as one educator observed, did not exhibit flexibility in terms of designing an all-encompassing philosophy for nonformal adult education programs. Most of their programs were sketchy.

Comments and reactions of the respondents regarding the diversity and fragmented nature of nonformal adult education confirmed the absence of a comprehensive policy. One educator stated that nonformal adult education policies and programs were either "technocratic" or "bureaucratic" in the sense that they were usually imposed from the top. In this connection, five of the respondents from the categories of program directors, educators and policy makers said that it was clear why the policies and programs were either bureaucratic or technocratic in nature. The key role players in policy development and program formulation were either experts or administrators of different government agencies such as the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finance Ministry, the National Planning Commission, the Ministry of Labor and Welfare, and the Ministry of Local Development. Usually, some technical consultants were also hired by the government for developing plans. In essence, the government had been hesitant to commit itself to people-oriented policy in strengthening nonformal adult education as a real force for rural development. As one educator commented, the process of change that might evolve through such force would be threatening to the status quo.

In general, nonformal adult education programs in Nepal lacked formulation of a broad policy and its subsequent implementation. All of the respondents commented that some programs emphasized the need for raising awareness levels while others focused on literacy and socio-economic skill development. Critical comments were made about policies that did not encourage greater development potential of nonformal adult education. According to one administrator,

> development problems of the illiterate masses are numerous. Looking at their context, these problems are varied and of the basic nature such as the problem of better health, hygiene and sanitation, lack of better living conditions of the family, lack of availability of educational opportunities, absence of acquisition and actualization of socially and economically gainful skills and lack of environmental protection. Resolving these problems will necessitate making the people themselves aware, skilled and resourceful which can be possible through the process of learning, and in this context, the viable process of learning in rural Nepal will be the nonformal learning strategy. Hence, the policy decision regarding this strategy must emphasize awareness raising, and skill development and application, including the learning of reading and writing.

Reflecting on this concern, one policy maker suggested that the current program be reviewed and assessed in terms of content areas, strategies, materials and costs. More impetus should be given to the currently initiated nonformal adult education campaign with strong policy formulation in terms of producing critically aware, economically productive and educationally knowledgeable people. In order to achieve positive outcomes from this campaign, an all-out effort at the national level should be made not only to deal with the difficult terrain of the country but also to counter vested interest groups and other reactionary elements of society.

Seven respondents representative of all categories pointed out that without a strong policy which supported an accelerated operation of nonformal adult education program, more promising outcomes could not be expected. They cautioned that a multitude of persistent problems still had to be addressed.

One policy maker noted that resource commitment to this program was quite negligible and in such a situation it would be simply wishful thinking to contemplate implementing an extensive rural development-oriented nonformal adult education program. Resources would not be available for all prerequisites of a program such as preparation of trained personnel, development of needs-responsive instructional materials, provision of adequate physical facilities, and adequate supply of other resources.

Centralized political and administrative systems and lack of cooperation from the lower levels of the administrative and political hierarchies were other crucial problems. Similarly, the heterogeneous characteristics of the country as seen in the topography, social diversities, cultural practices, and educational opportunities was a significant factor in shaping suitable nonformal adult education programs. But a general insensitivity to these diversities, basically indicated by implementing the same type of program everywhere, limited its growth and enrichment. Encouraging nongovernmental organizations to implement programs similar to those of the government restricted the scope of their activities and their potential contribution to effective policy formulation. Four of the respondents from policy makers and educators categories argued that the major problem impeding the formulation of a people-oriented policy of nonformal adult education and its subsequent implementation was caused by the reactionary attitudes of the power holders. If they were really committed to developing and expanding nonformal adult education, they would have worked out various options to allocate the resources needed for this purpose. A real change in the attitude of the power holders was regarded as crucial to the emergence of a conducive environment for developing nonformal adult education in Nepal.

## Impact of Current Policies and Programs

The respondents expressed mixed reactions regarding the impact of current policies of nonformal adult education programs. In their views, unconsolidated and sketchy policies made it difficult to gain a comprehensive perspective on the impact of nonformal adult education. Depending upon the nature of programs, the respondents perceived positive as well as negative impacts. According to the respondents, programs which included awareness-raising, information dissemination on various functional areas, and literacy components appeared to be helpful in developing the perceptual and communication skills of the participants. But, as one policy maker remarked, this type of program was operated primarily at the project and area specific level. Another administrator felt that increased effectiveness of literacy programs would result if they were integrated into income generating activities. He cited an example from the *Small Farmer Development Project* which yielded positive results, mainly because it stressed the operation of income generating activities along with an emphasis on literacy skills and knowledge. Some respondents were not encouraged to acquire just literacy because this alone would not enable the illiterate poor to overcome the multiple determinants of their poverty. One educator affirmed the need for taking initiatives to make nonformal adult education more progressive in terms of raising its potential to attack poverty. According to another educator, the limitation regarding encouraging people's participation in the entire process of policy analysis and program development was the reason that they did not feel a sense of ownership in the program. Without ensuring local autonomy, the prospect of success of the program would diminish.

## Improving Policies and Programs

The respondents suggested various policy directions in order to address rural development needs effectively. One administrator emphasized that the nonformal adult education policy should focus on the preparation of specialized professionals to design and conduct the program. These professionals would require leadership skills and qualities along with knowledge in the design and operation of nonformal adult education. In addition, they would need basic information about such fundamental aspects of life as health care, improved agricultural techniques, family planning, sanitation and nutrition measures, environmental protection, and identification and operation of economically productive skills. Moreover, they would also need to be aware of various service delivery agencies and play a key role in mobilizing the services of various agencies for the benefit of the participants.

One program director suggested that a policy which stressed an increased involvement on the part of nongovernment organizations should be emphasized. He felt that adoption of this policy would also make a significant contribution to achieving the goals of the literacy campaign. He further suggested that the nonformal adult education programs should be based on a policy which tended to address regional and ethnic needs, included basic development activities, and continued for a longer period of time to encompass post-literacy activities.

One policy maker advocated that a policy which stressed expanding the scope of program coverage should be adopted along with placing high priority on improving the total package of learning. In this context, he observed that the classroom-oriented nonformal adult education program would have to be replaced by work-oriented activities which could be conducted in their real life situation.

All of the respondents felt that high priority should be given to a nonformal adult education policy which was committed to eradicating illiteracy, to promoting productivity among illiterate adults, particularly women, and to mobilizing all strata in the community including teachers, students, social workers, and political parties. Such a policy, the respondents thought, would make the participants not only literate but also functionally competent in dealing with the fundamental needs of life, eventually creating an atmosphere conducive to rural development.

Another policy maker suggested that a policy of nonformal adult education would have to be conceptualized at the political level first, and at the government level next. He felt that government alone could not do much to educate people. Therefore, he proposed that any policy of nonformal adult education must emphasize an expanded operation of the program by mobilizing political parties. Similarly, the need for technical support should be met by the government with the provision of follow-up activities. Implicit in this approach was the strategy of making various political parties and the government aware of their moral obligation to promote development that serves people.

One of the administrators emphasized that if the participants saw better economic prospects through the acquisition of literacy and other life-related skills, their enthusiasm to become involved in the program would increase. Therefore, he felt that a policy that gave priority to both literacy and income-generating activities would ensure popular support for participation because of optimism in possibilities for the improvement of rural life.

One of the educators presented a global perspective regarding the policy of nonformal adult education program. He stated:

> Policy on nonformal adult education must focus on such components as needs assessment, participatory approach to program designing, implementing, monitoring as well as evaluating, and adopting a bottom-up strategy for planning, including continued focus on research and development.

In his view nonformal adult education programs based on this policy recommendation would be more effective because needs assessment of rural life and involvement of people in program development would orient the program to deal with their social, economic and cultural development needs. Moreover, a people-centred approach would generate an "organismic" kind of motivation among the participants and lead them to maximize their efforts in making the program successful.

Another educator suggested a policy of decentralization with respect to the formulation and implementation of nonformal adult education programs. He argued that autonomy of the participants would allow them to identify the program that would be to their benefit, carry out the program with mutual cooperation, judge it in terms of their reality and improve it as suited to meeting their needs.

The respondents identified some major elements which could help to make nonformal adult education programs effective. In this connection, one of the administrators stated:

> Any nonformal adult education program must focus on participants' immediate needs, encourage people's participation at the strategic points of the program such as setting program goals, deciding the types of activities, and conducting monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, attention must be given to diversifying the program with emphasis on functional literacy, skill training and rural transformation. It would be equally important to mobilize locally available resources, for instance, local institutions, expertise and materials and build self-confidence of the participants through the approach of learning and doing.

One of the policy makers expressed similar ideas when he stated that in order to make the nonformal adult education program effective, it must be conceived as a prerequisite for rural development rather than simply as a component of development.

Five of the respondents maintained that nonformal adult education must be launched as a national campaign in order to eliminate illiteracy within a limited amount of time. To meet this goal, a sound workable strategy founded on political determination would be necessary. In this context, a representative comment indicated that a

> commitment must be made to spread nonformal adult education programs throughout the country with emphasis on coordinated and integrated approach to attending various basic life-related needs. Immediate needs for rural development, basically in such areas as health, sanitation, agriculture, environment, and income generation would have to be addressed for which operation of field-oriented programs with the support of corresponding structures must be necessary.

All of the respondents believed in the long-term prospects of nonformal adult education as a force for improving the quality of rural life. They said that nonformal adult education should not be merely a program of three R's, rather it should offer practical skill education which would not only foster the participants' technical capabilities but eventually enhance the economy of the nation. Furthermore, they expressed the view that nonformal adult education designed to achieve rural development through the improvement of agriculture, health, family environment, and the surrounding environment would eventually help develop the country as well.

They also saw increased potential in nonformal adult education programs as a means to serve rural illiterate adults if various government and nongovernment organizations were to orient themselves to conduct field-based learning and training activities. Centrally designed training programs are not likely to have similar potential.

Similarly, they proposed that in order to get any development activity off the ground, people would have to be made capable of making contributions intellectually, physically and economically; but the foundation for generating such contributions rested on people's awareness, power of communication, productive skills, and rational as well as critical thinking for which people-centred nonformal adult education programs were crucial.

In general, the policy level personnel perceived nonformal adult education as a fundamental strategy for total development. They suggested that this approach to education must be emphasized with appropriate and strong policy decisions. Similarly, the implementation aspect must be considered in terms of the reality of target groups. Therefore, their participation at every critical point of the program development process such as needs assessment, program development, material production, operational method and evaluation must be recognized. More specifically, it must also be recognized that the development of nonformal adult education resting on people-oriented and reality-centred philosophies will eventually help to alleviate poverty.

All of the respondents expressed their hope that the present political context would create opportunities for making nonformal adult education a catalyst in enabling the poor to unite themselves on democratic values and principles and emerge from wretchedness and oppression.

## Summary

Nine individuals associated with policy matters in the field of nonformal education were asked questions related to needs and barriers of rural development. In addition, they were also asked about the current policies on and impacts of this field of learning. Finally, they provided suggestions for improving this approach to learning as an effective strategy for initiating rural transformation in Nepal.

The problems of rural development include various factors such as mass illiteracy, poverty, low status of women, poor technologies, inadequate health and sanitary facilities, and a low level of people's participation in decision making processes. One of the strategies for dealing with these barriers, in the respondents' views, would be to promote nonformal adult education programs. Whatever has been achieved so far as a result of this learning approach is encouraging. But many issues and challenges also exist.

The respondents suggested solutions such as expansion of learning opportunities for the illiterate masses with a focus on raising the awareness level and imparting literacy as well as other skills and knowledge with economic potential. Towards this end, they identified the need for making a comprehensive policy decision on nonformal adult education designed to create enabling power among the target groups. This might be achieved through a participatory approach in which people critically reflect on their reality and initiate constructive processes in order to achieve economic, social and political benefits that would enable them to emerge from deplorable conditions.

# CHAPTER 9

# PERCEPTIONS OF NONFORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN NEPAL

In order to substantiate the ideas presented in Chapter Seven through assessing realities faced in the field with nonformal education programs, various people involved in conducting nonformal education programs were asked to provide their perceptions of the programs. This chapter includes views and perceptions of respondents in different categories such as program level individuals, facilitators and program participants.

Seven program level individuals consisting of the Under-Secretary and Program Supervisors of the Adult Education Section of the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as nonformal education experts associated with various nongovernment organizations were contacted. Their responsibilities included planning, programing and implementing nonformal education programs. They provided their views in response to questions related to various aspects of the programs such as the types of nonformal education programs, actors involved in operating them, participants' comments on the programs, types of materials, evaluation procedures, strengths and weaknesses, and effective form of programs in the Nepalese context.

Seven facilitators comprised of both males and females from different villages of the Nuwakot District were interviewed. The facilitators who were selected for interviewing were from two categories -- those who were involved in conducting only literacy activities and those who conducted the project *Civic Awareness and Life-Related Skills for Girls and Women*. The questions they were asked related to reasons why they chose to work as facilitators, the functions and roles which they performed in this capacity, the learning activities which they conducted, and the strengths and weaknesses of the activities.

Thirteen participants, some of whom were involved in literacy programs and some in literacy as well as skill development projects were identified with the help of the District Education Officer and the Program Supervisor, and were interviewed. The interviewees included ten males and three females. Agriculture was their main occupation, but women also had to engage in other household chores. The participants were asked about the types of the programs in which they were involved, reasons for their involvement, benefits acquired from the programs, and the type of program which they considered important for improving the quality of their lives. All interviews were conducted in Nepali; direct quotations in this chapter are the researcher's translations.

## Programs and Implementation Strategies

The program personnel were asked questions related to the types of programs, operational strategies, materials, participants' reactions, evaluation strategies, strengths and weaknesses, and ways to improve the programs. In response to the types of the programs, they indicated that two types of nonformal education programs are being implemented in Nepal: nonformal adult education and nonformal children's education programs. Of these two types, nonformal adult education programs have received relatively greater emphasis. The nonformal adult education programs are for people within the 15 to 45 age range. The respondents identified various goals of this particular program such as providing information and developing skills relevant to the needs of illiterate adults; developing positive attitudes; preparing them for community development; raising their level of awareness; and assisting them in improving the quality of their lives.

The nonformal children's education program, on the other hand, revolves around designing educational activities, specifically for educationally disadvantaged children --with or without schooling -- within the age of 6 to 15 years. Functional literacy is the major area of learning which is directed toward making participants literate and encouraging them to strive for further education.

The Ministry of Education and Culture is the leading agency in developing and implementing nonformal adult education programs. However, many other government and non-government organizations are also involved in these programs and have, in general, adopted guidelines and materials developed by the Ministry. Generally, the nongovernment organizations followed the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture with respect to including disadvantaged groups of people such as peasants, slum dwellers, and women in their programs.

The Ministry has just started the National Literacy Campaign in a few districts, which is oriented towards the goal of eradicating mass illiteracy in the country. This campaign emphasizes the need for expanding both nonformal adult and children's education programs.

The Ministry has also developed a series of learning materials for both nonformal adult and children's education programs. For nonformal adult education programs, a series of five primers entitled "Naya Goreto" has been produced. In addition, a set of posters to be used for discussion in the learning session and a set of games to be used, both for imparting literacy skills and raising awareness of the participants have been developed. A number of booklets on population education, health, forestry, fishery, potato farming, kitchen gardening, night blindness, and mother and child health care have also been produced.

Like the "Naya Goreto" series, developed for nonformal adult education programs, a separate series of primers entitled "Naulo Bihan" have been produced for unschooled and dropout children. In addition to the materials developed and produced by the Ministry of Education and Culture, some other government agencies and nongovernment organizations have also developed learning materials. These materials address the fundamental development needs of the participants. In this respect, a nongovernment organization expert stated:

> Learning materials for the participants of the nonformal system are of different types. Each type intends not only to provide literacy skills but also involves them in reflecting on their reality critically in terms of identifying causes of problems and envisioning possible solutions for betterment. Above all, the materials are used as a means for unleashing the participants' motivation and creativity.

Various individuals such as the Minister, the Secretary, the Additional Secretary, the Joint Secretary of the Primary Education Section, and the Under Secretary of the Adult Education Section of the Ministry of Education and Culture are responsible for selecting and deciding the types of nonformal education programs for the purpose of implementation in the national context. But programs under the jurisdiction of other government agencies and nongovernment organizations are decided by respective institutional heads in consultation with other related officials. According to all of the respondents, the Ministry of Education and Culture has emphasized the need for the participation of other government agencies and nongovernment organizations in the operation of nonformal education programs in the country.

Nonformal education programs under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Culture are implemented by the District Education Offices. Primarily, these offices organize training for school supervisors in their respective districts. These individuals are then sent to train the facilitators of the programs. The District Education Offices are also responsible for arranging the supply of necessary materials and for the payment of salaries of facilitators. Along with the District Education Officers, Supervisors and selected local school teachers are involved in supervising the programs.

## Roles and Functions of Facilitators

Facilitators are responsible for conducting nonformal adult education programs at the field level. Agencies and organizations which design and deliver nonformal adult education programs select facilitators and make arrangements for their training.

### Reasons for Becoming Facilitators

The respondents expressed various reasons for accepting the position of facilitator. Some of them stated that they accepted this position so that they could use their leisure time productively. One of them said that he took this position on the request of the villagers who wanted him to serve the rural people by helping them to gain new knowledge. A number of female facilitators felt that women in rural areas were educationally deprived and socially discriminated against. Therefore, they became involved in this task in order to encourage women's participation in education in rural areas. In the views of these facilitators, unless the status of women in society was improved, problems of rural development could not be addressed effectively. One of the female facilitators stated that she agreed to work as a facilitator in order to impart to the female participants in the program not only literacy skills but also other life-related skills in such areas as sewing, knitting, nutrition, health care, environment, sanitation, and agriculture. She stated that acquisition of skills and knowledge in these areas serves as a means to improve home management, child care, and the family environment.

One female facilitator presented an interesting experience regarding how creative facilitators should be in bringing about success in the program:

> At one point in time, I had difficulty to bring the participants into the program because they were hesitant. I thought it was a challenge for me, and I had to do something to overcome it. I tried to make them understand that learning is important for life by citing many examples. But they were still reluctant. Then I asked my 43 year old illiterate mother whether she would like to participate in the learning program. She liked the idea. Then, I told the participants her reasons for joining the program. They were convinced that.age did not matter for learning

In reflecting on this experience, she formed the opinion that the facilitator's role did not end in providing educational knowledge. She felt strongly that facilitators should act as catalysts or change agents. While assuming the role in this capacity, they would have to visualize themselves in different frames such as co-workers, advisors, friends, mentors, informants, and resource persons. Facilitators should also conceive multiple strategies during the implementation of their role such as demonstration, story telling, presenting analogies and creating simulations.

## Functions of Facilitators

All of the facilitators reported that, as facilitators, they performed two types of roles while conducting nonformal adult education programs. The first type focused on such activities as attending to participants, selecting learning materials and operating literacy activities. Another type centred around raising participants' awareness of their needs and problems, and identifying various life-related skills and also strategies in order to help them change their perceptions and understandings. In addition, the facilitators mentioned that they should also involve participants in information sharing about various development plans, programs and agencies.

Depending upon the different nature of nonformal adult education programs, the facilitators perform the first or the second type of function. The first type of function is predominant in programs with primarily a literacy focus, whereas the second type of function is significant in programs with more than literacy activities. To conduct an integrated type of program requires the facilitator to be more creative and resourceful. They would have to act as multiple role players. In this connection, one respondent who worked as a facilitator in a literacy as well as skill development program stated that,

> in addition to imparting literacy and numeracy, I helped them acquire various skills such as sewing, knitting, child care and homemaking. I also organized familiarization visit to different offices and institutions where they could state their problems. I invited officials associated with different development organizations, especially from forestry, sanitation, nutrition, health, and agriculture areas as resource persons to provide the participants with relevant information. I also encouraged them to discuss the legal rights of females in Nepal.

It is evident from the above statement that facilitators endeavored to widen the mental horizons of the illiterate poor as well as to equip them with gainful skills. In general, they attempt to be pro-active, creative and visionary. Emergence of these qualities in the facilitators depended upon their orientation and training. The facilitator who made the above statement was involved in an integrated nonformal education project. The nature of the project would require the facilitators to be trained to perform roles that addressed the economic, social and educational problems of the participants.

## Participants' Expectations

Participants enrolled in the program for the purpose of fulfilling certain expectations. Three different types of expectations were mentioned: expectations related to literacy; expectations related to awareness development; and expectations related to skill development. These expectations were summarized by one of the participants as follows:

> What we need in life is to make ourselves able to live a humane life. For this we need our "inner eyes" opened with an education. However, this is not the end because we should also have opportunities to make ourselves economically better off which requires us to be skilled and resourceful too.

Learning literacy and numeracy skills, according to the participants, would be an important achievement in their lives. A number of them indicated that acquisition of knowledge and skills of the three R's would enable them to read, write and do simple arithmetic. As a result, they could communicate effectively and clearly without being dependent on others, benefit from understanding information, have confidence in not being exploited, maintain family accounts and records, and develop a literacy tradition in the family.

Illiterate participants saw value on literacy skills and knowledge because knowledge and skills of literacy would help them open their "internal eyes." This feeling can be sensed from the response of one of the participants who said:

> Because I cannot read and write, I always feel sorry for myself. I cannot understand anything written in different books, notices and posters. If I want to know about them, I have to find some one who can read all those things for me. I see myself as a handicapped person. I feel that I have lost an important part of life. However, I have a desire to learn reading and writing. I think it is not too late to learn.

Other participants expressed the view that learning of literacy would lead them to make fruitful gains in their lives because they would have a chance to become familiar with the world of letters. However, they also felt that if the learning program focused on developing their consciousness. This would enable them to improve their circumstances.

The participants' responses regarding the awareness raising aspect of nonformal adult education revealed that they expected to grow intellectually by way of reflecting on existing and emerging social, cultural, economic, technological, health, and environmental issues within their own context. All of the participants showed an interest in developing awareness of health, child care and economic issues. The female participants wanted to become knowledgeable about various inoculations as preventive measures for their children's health as well as of their legal rights.

Most of the participants stated that they had great interest in learning various social and economic skills, mainly for two purposes: to save on expenses and to move towards self-reliance. Female participants predominantly wished to learn skills such as knitting, sewing, weaving, and household related skills, which they felt would improve the living conditions of the family and help create an industrious environment. Participants, in general, wanted nonformal adult education programs to focus on skills that would be helpful for improved farming and for operating agro-based and other locally available resource-based cottage industries as well as small business undertakings.

In general, all of the participants stated that their expectations from nonformal adult education programs had to do with being able to lead a better life for which all necessary elements of human development including literacy, productive skills and awareness raising aspects would have to be stressed.

## Perceptions of Program Impact

Program personnel provided information about the participants' reactions to the nonformal adult education program. Generally, they felt that the participants appeared to find the activities useful and interesting and viewed the program as a positive experience. They showed interest in attending classes and taking part in class activities; participation in the class discussion was viewed as encouraging. However, four respondents noted that such a positive atmosphere was not in evidence everywhere. There were cases where the participants' motivation diminished as the program advanced. A possible explanation is that this was due to the inability of program activities to provide tangible benefits to the participants. However, some participants who came from a relatively better economic condition seemed to place higher value on literacy and general knowledge.

All of the program personnel mentioned that nonformal adult education programs had influenced the daily lives of the participants. Those programs or projects which incorporated awareness raising and skill learning components appeared to be most effective. This type of program tended to encourage the participants to initiate changes in their living conditions.

The female participants showed their interest in such vocational skills as sewing, knitting, stitching, and kitchen gardening whereas the male participants inclined to develop skills in different trades, particularly agriculture related trades. In addition, the respondents indicated that if the participants were to get some resource support to start with actualizing the skills they learned, they would be able to raise their productivity levels. Some participants managed to avail themselves of some resources to translate skills which they acquired and by doing so they benefitted in two ways. First, they could spend their leisure time in productive work, and second, they could minimize their family resources in sewing, knitting and homemaking.

Preparation and use of oral re-hydration treatment, measures of personal hygiene and sanitation, and better family health care were cited by program personnel as other important areas of the program which helped to broaden the knowledge and skill base of the participants. In many instances, the participants exhibited a capacity to identify problems of various types and to work out corresponding solutions. Program personnel also indicated that development of abilities among the participants to read written and printed matter, to express their ideas and opinions orally and in writing, and to solve simple calculations had reduced their chances of being dependent and exploited. In the views of the program personnel, the program had also helped the participants to understand the value of educating children.

The facilitators also took note of the participants' comments regarding the impact of nonformal education programs. Those involved in conducting the literacy program perceived that even though the participants felt that the program lacked skill development and the subsequent application, they showed interest in acquiring literacy because it enabled them to read and write. This ability reduced their dependency on others to understand and communicate messages and minimized the possibilities of being exploited. In addition, they appeared to have acquired the power of perceiving problems sensibly and critically, thinking of ways to deal with them appropriately, improving their vocabulary and knowledge, and maintaining accounts and records for household tasks.

The facilitators perceived that participants in the literacy and skill development project were highly motivated in terms of learning both literacy and the other practical skills. Their knowledge of literacy skills benefited them in the same ways as for the participants of the program that emphasized only literacy. In addition, they felt strongly the significance of other areas of learning such as learning of economically productive skills, homemaking skills, health and sanitation skills, and social skills. Moreover, the provision of resources ensured by the project enabled them to practise the acquired skills which increased their confidence in learning because they could realize some tangible benefits in a situation where life was full of unfulfilled needs.

The facilitators concurred with participants' comments regarding the usefulness of nonformal adult education programs. They perceived that the literacy program contributed not only to making the participants educationally advantaged but also to developing in them a sense of responsibility toward society and a desire to address social problems, and to initiating a process of social dynamism whereby the entire social fabric could be developed. Moreover, they found it helpful to equip the participants with basic skills because such opportunities unleash the innate potential of the participants and encourage them to be enterprising. They also perceived that the awareness raising and skill training focuses of the program would assume greater relevance in improving the quality of the participants' lives. The facilitators also recognized the practicality of an integrated nonformal adult education for the empowerment of rural people.

## Strengths of the Programs

The program personnel identified various strengths of the nonformal adult education programs. They saw the strengths of the programs in terms of training, methodology, materials and organizational involvement. A supervisor respondent stated:

> The trainers' and facilitators' training regarding the implementation of the program was relevant, useful and effective. The approach, methodology and materials adopted in the program implementation were fairly participant-oriented. Specifically, development and use of different types of materials were stimulating to the participants. Involvement of the government and non-government organizations in implementing nonformal adult education programs was another good aspect.

Personnel also highlighted other strengths such as the cost-effectiveness of the program and the possibility of a linkage between the formal and the nonformal systems. According to one expert associated with a nongovernment organization,

> the nonformal adult education program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture was said to be cost-effective. As the materials and managerial costs incurred on the nonformal adult education program of the Ministry of Education and Culture was minimum, the per-participant cost tended to be low. In addition, the National Literacy Campaign attempted to link nonformal and formal education by involving personnel and physical facilities of the formal system in conducting nonformal adult education programs.

The facilitators identified various strengths which they noticed in the current nonformal adult education programs. They commented positively on the continuity in applying participant-centred methods and producing relevant learning materials. The program operation schedule and focus on various life-related content were suitable to real life situations. Similarly, an emphasis on bringing disadvantaged people into the program was viewed as a progressive step. Program personnel also indicated that operation of various nonformal adult education projects offered meaningful experiences. They felt that such experiences might have potential to make nonformal adult education programs effective in addressing basic development needs.

The participants were asked to describe interesting and useful aspects of the program activities in which they had been involved. Generally, they seemed to respond favorably to both the content focus and the operational strategies of the program.

The participants in the literacy program found it useful not only in terms of helping them acquire literacy but also providing them with opportunities for analyzing problems related to deforestation, land slides, health hazards, bad sanitation, sexual discrimination against women, unplanned family situation and poor child care practices. Similarly, discussions about social taboos, undesirable social practices, alcoholism and gambling led them to realize the negative consequences for the family and society. Sharing of information about techniques relating to afforestation, family planning, improved farming, homemaking, and better sanitation and health care among participants elevated the level of their understanding. Dissemination of information regarding acquisition of services from delivery agencies helped them to discover the roles and functions of such agencies and also made them confident that they could acquire services through their own initiative.

The participants in literacy and skill development projects realized that the provision to supply material resources to them was practically significant because they could apply what they had learned. Consequently, some participants took the initiative to start knitting as a subsidiary source of income. In addition, they also benefited from literacy in terms of reading and writing letters and making applications, signing papers and writing names, maintaining accounts and family records, and communicating with clarity and confidence.

The participants also responded positively to the operational aspect of the program. In particular, the practice of forming small groups and conducting discussions on some specific topics created enthusiasm among the participants. Similarly, use of skits or jokes or some short stories as an icebreaker before the session motivated the participants in the program. Presentation of a certain topic with the use of pictures, posters, metaphors, and stories was stimulating. The provision for free distribution of reading materials and stationery to the participants was an attraction. In the same way, operation of the program at the time of their convenience was an encouragement and the most thoughtful aspect, particularly in the literacy and skill development projects.

## Weaknesses of the Programs

There were also numerous weaknesses of the programs. In this respect, the program personnel identified constraints and shortcomings which they thought had impeded the effectiveness of the program. Among them were the lack of commitment, inadequate resource allocations and professionally inefficient structural arrangements that obstructed full development of the program. A representative view expressed by the program level respondents is as follows:

> Despite the recognition of the importance of nonformal adult education, there is no real commitment at the national level in terms of adequate resource allocation to this program. Structural deficiency is another weakness. At the national level the Adult Education Section of the Ministry of Education and Culture is the only national body responsible for developing plans and programs, and implementing nonformal education activities throughout the country. Lack of a professionally sound structure at the national, regional, district and village level will limit the development potential of nonformal adult education programs.

Similarly, they indicated that the program lacked coordination support, research and evaluation, supervision and monitoring, and post-literacy programs. A respondent with administrative responsibility in the Ministry of Education and Culture respondent stated:

> There is a lack of adequate and effective coordination between program implementing agencies which has restricted consolidation and expansion of the program. For the successful implementation of the program there is limitation of adequate research and evaluation techniques. The monitoring and supervision component of the program is looked after mostly by nonprofessionals in a fragmented way, and the lack of appropriate feedback has restricted the enrichment and strengthening of the program. Additionally, the lack of follow-up activities and post-literacy programs exist as other major shortcomings of the program.

All of the program level personnel reacted negatively to the existing practice of evaluation of the nonformal adult education program. Except for a few evaluative studies undertaken for some of the projects by consultative agencies, the evaluations of the regular programs were conducted by the District Education Offices or by other administrators based on information supplied by these offices. They doubted the validity of the data collected and conclusions reached by the District Education Offices. The lack of professionals was considered to be a major obstacle in designing and implementing effective evaluation strategies.

Those who were familiar with programs expressed their suspicion with respect to the reported outcomes of the programs because of the lack of reliable information. In any case, there were mixed comments regarding the utility of the program.

The facilitators also highlighted various weaknesses of the program such as inadequate coverage of content areas, insufficient supply of learning materials, short duration of facilitators' training, inadequate emphasis on producing more relevant materials by taking into account social, economic and cultural settings of the participants, and decreasing attendance of the participants in the program. In addition, they identified evidence of low participant involvement in actions which might be assigned to such problems as lack of material support, noncommittal attitude on the part of service delivery agencies, and lack of technically and professionally sound follow-up activities.

The participants also pointed out numerous weaknesses. The striking lacunae in the program was the shortage of learning materials and inadequate supplies. Suitable physical facilities were also lacking; learning activities were conducted usually in a small spaces made available in someone's house by the participants themselves.

There was a shortage of trainers, particularly, for conducting skill training. Consequently, the participants encountered difficulties in acquiring detailed practical knowledge. Similarly, learning materials and stationery were not delivered on time. Due to the lack of such facilities many of those who wanted to be participants were left out of the program. The duration of the program was very short. The time schedule was so limited that the participants were constrained in achieving an adequate level of literacy and other basic skills, let alone socially and economically gainful skills. Moreover, the facilitators stated that productive skill training activities congruent with participants' occupational background did not take place.

Considering the information provided by the participants, it is understood that in Nepal there is a deficiency in the nonformal adult education program in terms of providing participants with occupational skills. Only some projects, which have adequate financial provision, have offered skill training opportunities together with necessary inputs for actualizing the acquired skills. The regular program, which is always faced with financial stringency, has to omit the skill learning component in favor of just literacy activities. Various service delivery agencies do not seem to provide their services to the participants with a view to helping them to undertake gainful projects based on their acquired knowledge and skills. On the other hand, the participants' initiative in organizing themselves to act as the pressure group in closing the existing gap between them and service delivery agencies seemed to be lacking.

## Suggestions for Improvement

With respect to the need for improvement of the nonformal adult education program, the program personnel suggested various solutions. They emphasized the need for increased political commitment, more adequate resource allocation, and establishment of a professionally sound organization. The following is a representative statement:

> In order to give more impetus to the nonformal adult education program, it would be necessary to have a strong political commitment. The political commitment must be followed by an approval of adequate financial allocation in order to implement the program effectively and on an expanded scale. An increased requirement for resources should be met from the international assistance. Moreover, a professional structure from the central to the grassroots level will also be essential as well as the functional coordination among various bodies.

Similarly, they felt the importance of preparing professional cadres, linking nonformal adult education to income generating activities, adopting participatory approaches to the program implementation, conducting follow-up activities and striving for using the mother tongue instead of the Nepali language while carrying out the program activities. One supervisor stated:

> Preparing trained professionals, linking nonformal adult education programs to income generating activities, emphasizing participatory and action-oriented philosophies, developing follow-up programs in the form of post literacy and using mother tongue in the learning environment are crucial factors in the operation of nonformal adult education activities.

In sum, the program personnel offered their views after reflecting on the different aspects of the program; they highlighted participants' perceptions of the program and reactions to program evaluation and impact. Finally, they shed some light on various weaknesses and strengths. In general, they recommended that nonformal adult education programs should focus on the twin problems of illiteracy and poverty in Nepal.

The facilitators felt that the current nonformal adult education program could not serve the purpose of empowering the participants to fulfill their basic development needs unless measures were taken, first, to continue building on the strengths and, second, to address the existing weaknesses.

They suggested that the facilitators' training program must focus on getting them to know about various skills on which depended the dynamism of the basic development process. Likewise, their understanding of the participant-centred method of conducting learning activities must be raised. They also stressed the need for extending the program operation schedule and for more resources in order to ensure better materials and facilities. They urged that a global focus be developed by incorporating literacy, skill development, awareness raising, and rural development components.

They pleaded for a regular system to supervise, monitor and carry out follow-up activities. In addition, a better incentive provision for facilitators must be arranged. In keeping with the development potential of nonformal education, professionally sound structural arrangements, which guarantees both human and material resources for the program operation, must be established. Moreover, efforts must be made to establish an operational coordination system with various service delivery agencies ranging from central to the grassroots level so as to acquire their services for an effective implementation of nonformal adult education programs.

Taking into account the failures of coordination in the past, steps must be taken not to allow the situation to persist. In this connection, an organized movement of participants may be set in motion which may act as a pressure point to rally for better coordination.

The facilitators expressed the view that these measures of improvement would contribute to stepping up the pace of development in the life of the illiterate poor. However, the critical roles which the facilitators have to play determined the effectiveness of the program. In reflecting on this reality, one facilitator stated:

> An effective nonformal education program generating positive results is dependent on competencies of the facilitators. The facilitators' competencies may be unleashed with an effective training program which must focus on building their leadership qualities, managerial skills, organization skills, negotiating skills, and implementation as well as evaluation skills.

Clearly, the more comprehensive the program, the more it becomes development-oriented. But the crucial factor in between is the role of the facilitators which is greatly dependent on their competencies.

The participants also identified a number of important steps for strengthening the program, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Their suggestions appeared mostly in relation to the program weaknesses. They mentioned that the program could be made more attractive as well as useful by incorporating diverse training courses related to skill development. In particular, they commented on the need for extensive training in agriculture and cottage industries and recommended that skills such as carpet weaving, food preparation, and making garments be provided to women participants. Importance of providing knowledge and skills related to animal husbandry and veterinary skills was also stressed. Some of the participants wanted economically gainful skills using locally available resources to be included in the program.

The participants indicated that there should be a provision which would help them translate knowledge and skills learned in the program to actual practice. They further recommended that the program should provide inputs to apply the skills in a real life situation. Furthermore, they proposed that the program be oriented to impart marketing skills.

Another area of emphasis was to be knowledgeable about existing and emerging social as well as economic issues in order to be able to deal with them. They saw the need for expanding the program coverage in order to ensure that all those who wanted to participate in it had an easy access. They also focused on the importance of imparting training in diversified areas with the involvement of an increased number of trainers. Participants stressed that observation tours be organized to visit different project sites so that they could broaden their knowledge base. The female participants showed their willingness to continue their learning for which they suggested the establishment of reading centres in their settlement areas. Finally, the participants identified the need for extending the duration of the program so that many more important subjects could be dealt with.

Regarding the appropriateness and effectiveness of learning materials, respondents from all categories suggested that learning materials be developed to address the needs, interests and reality of the participants. However, one program supervisor recommended that the learning materials be developed in the mother tongue of linguistically diverse groups of participants. Similarly, he suggested that the learning materials should depict diverse social, ethnic and topographical situations.

Different types of materials should be produced not only for imparting literacy knowledge and skills but also for making participants aware of their needs and problems and better informed about various ways to improve problem-ridden situations. Additionally, the program personnel indicated that in order to fulfill the intents of different types of materials the facilitators must be competent in using them effectively. In addition, they recommended that provision for physical inputs, at least initially, must be ensured to enable the participants to initiate productive activities.

As the participants considered their lives affected by illiteracy, lack of skills and knowledge, degraded social status and worsening economic conditions, they suggested that appropriate and adequate opportunities be provided for development. One of such opportunities they recommended was to conduct a learning program which addressed their immediate needs by way of raising their level of awareness, imparting them literacy skills and knowledge, developing their income generating skills, and by getting them to know information about new plans and programs. Their reaction to operating such a program was highly positive. One participant stated:

> We live in poverty. We have poverty because we lack power, especially the power of knowledge, skill and awareness. Therefore, we think, if we had opportunities we could do something. For us opportunities would mean provision for such learning which could help us to be skilled, aware and productive. Moreover, if learning was accompanied by action, we could make economic gains, too, but for which input supports would be essential. In sum, we want to be empowered in every basic aspects of better living through a relevant learning program.

## Summary

Program personnel, facilitators and participants were administered questionnaires and interview schedules with a view to soliciting their perceptions on nonformal adult education in Nepal. The respondents provided their views on various aspects of nonformal adult education such as the program types, materials, methodology, evaluation, strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for a relevant framework of nonformal adult education.

Two different types of nonformal education -- nonformal adult education and nonformal children education -- are in operation in Nepal. Various types of materials seem to have been used for providing educational inputs as well as for skill training. Methodological approaches to conducting programs differ in accordance with the objectives of different programs. Although there is a provision for evaluating the programs, the task is not carried out properly because of the lack of professionals. The respondents perceived various strengths of the programs, specifically in terms of the benefits gained from the literacy skills and knowledge. They also viewed the importance of awareness raising and skill development components. But, on the other hand, they indicated that various problems existed on the way to making nonformal adult education relevant to fulfilling basic needs of life.

In relation to the immediate needs of rural people -- which are related to adequate food, better health and employment opportunities -- they identified the importance of an overall development-oriented nonformal adult education program. They suggested that the focus of the program should be on both the identification and fulfillment of basic needs of the participants as well as on the development of their abilities to satisfy those needs.

# CHAPTER 10

# TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO NONFORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

Questions are often raised regarding the validity of causal relationships between illiteracy and underdevelopment; however, the synergy between education and development is generally accepted (Ahmed, Ming, Jalaluddin & Ramachandran, 1992). In this respect, Nepal's underdevelopment may be attributed, at least in part, to the massive illiteracy in the adult population. There is an urgency to designing and implementing learning programs that are responsive to the basic needs of the disadvantaged and marginalized people. Learning programs conducted up to the present seem to have been inadequate in one way or another. In this chapter, an attempt is made to propose a framework for nonformal adult education which is oriented toward empowering rural illiterate adults to improve the quality of their lives. The framework is developed within the context of a concept of development, relevant aspects of the Nepalese context and of the case studies, and the four major perspectives.

## Development and Nonformal Education

Discussions of development do not have a fixed focus. The "what" and "how" of development vary according to contextual circumstances that include not only physical conditions but also the socio-cultural milieu, political interest and other exogenous factors. As McKay (1990) has proposed, "development remains one of the most contentious concepts" (p. 5).

Attempts at identifying comprehensive ideas for development are continuing. In the deliberations at an experts' meeting held in Caracas, many countries recognized a number of social conditions as priority areas for development including health, shelter, vital services, education, democratic participation and the status of women (Henderson, 1990). This concept of development seems broader and more integrated than the traditional concept that relates primarily to macro-economic conditions.

A perspective on development beyond the economic realm appears to be gaining support. Gyawali (1990) stated that "development has to be expressed in terms of creativity, both individual and social, not merely an increase in resource consumption" (p. 131). Similarly, Hasan (1990) observed that

> few will dispute that no development is worthy of support which runs counter to the development of creative abilities, eschewal of violent means in achieving one's ends, and in inculcation of the concepts of peace and love among the target communities and populations. (p. 100)

The concept of development expressed in the preceding statements accords an increasing importance to people and their innate capabilities.

The interpretation of development from the perspective of fostering creative powers of people as well as from the economic and socio-political perspectives has led to conceptualizing different models of development. McKay (1990) has identified ten different models. Each specific model has its own priority. Some place emphasis on economic factors and some on socio-political factors. Models which are oriented to addressing basic needs of development usually emphasize smaller development projects focused on skill training. McKay (1990) labeled these models as "basic needs-oriented," "grassroots development" and "adjustment with a human face" models.

The appropriateness of these models may be assessed on the basis of their orientation toward attending to problems at the grassroots level by expanding the frontier of human capabilities and promoting knowledge and skills. Generating psychological strength and resourcefulness in human beings provides them with an enabling power to respond to the internal and external causes of suffering. External causes of suffering may have to do with the lack of skills, techniques and resources while the internal causes of suffering reside in self-degradation and an attitude of helplessness.

Realization of the objectives of basic needs-responsive models of development tends to depend largely on the initiative of people themselves, for which the primary requirement is to make them prepared, confident and capable. For this purpose, nonformal adult education focused on basic-needs-responsive developmental models assumes major significance. In other words, the framework of nonformal adult education should attend to strengthening both the mental and physical capabilities of illiterate people. Support for such a framework can be derived from the Nepalese situation, from the case studies and from ideas contained in the literature.

## The Nepalese Context

Nepal survives amidst frustrating poverty characterized by low per capita income (US $ 160 per annum), high rate of the growth of population (about 2.6 per cent), massive illiteracy (about 61 per cent), high rate of child mortality (15 per thousand population), and short life expectancy at birth (about 51 years). (See Table 1 for sources).

Nepal's appalling economic situation is accompanied by numerous social, cultural and political problems. The majority of the population is agrarian; people live in a situation of deprivation and deficit; dignity, self-worth, self-ability and self-power lie beyond their perspectives. Such a humiliating state of living for the majority of people is an outcome of the monopolistic use of power by the privileged few over an extended period of time.

Any development effort in Nepal must give priority to helping the weaker masses to emerge from a destitute situation and to attain more humane living conditions. Taking into account the areas of emphasis that are evident in the responses of participants in the field study, the aim of nonformal adult education program in Nepal must be to help people to become more resourceful both mentally and physically. In other words, intellectual and physical capabilities are a composite force for combating problems that stand in the way of meeting basic developmental needs.

The importance of learning and doing appears to be of considerable significance in the Nepalese context. Learning to perceive one's own life condition and surrounding reality with a broader and more critical mind as well as to achieve relevant skills and knowledge are of paramount importance. Such a strategy of learning will help poor people identify themselves as capable human beings and to enhance their abilities to analyze critically the problem-ridden reality and to act on it for change. The achievement of critical thinking capabilities must be accompanied by the development of relevant skills and techniques for initiating action. Focusing on enhancing intellectual powers to assess the social reality and using the power to bring about social and economic changes seems to be an appropriate approach to nonformal adult education programs in Nepal.

## Case of Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua

Analysis of nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua provides some lessons for new developments in this field. Except for Nicaragua, which seems to be more advanced than Nepal but is still one of the poorest countries in Central America, Bangladesh and Tanzania are similar to Nepal in terms of the level of economic development. The socio-economic reality in these countries is characterized by poverty, illiteracy, dependency and oppression. In order to combat these problems, governments have attempted to energize people through literacy programs for change and creating a society in which injustice, discrimination, inequality and exploitation are eliminated and in which increased opportunities become available to all.

On the assumption that people themselves can produce the energy and the strategies needed for change, emphasis was placed on developing people's psychological, physical and intellectual abilities. Consequently, learning packages consisting of literacy, critical awareness and skill oriented materials were developed. Although nonformal adult education programs in these countries encompassed both the emancipatory and development perspectives, there was a lack of commitment to designing and implementing an integrated approach to nonformal adult education. Nevertheless, the importance of various perspectives on nonformal adult education realized by different agencies in these countries indicates that such an integrated framework has potential for satisfying basic developmental needs in an effective manner.

Nonformal adult education programs in Bangladesh appear to have focused on all four perspectives on nonformal education but in a dissociated manner. Organizational interests seem to have influenced the selection of particular perspectives for various programs. The purpose of nonformal adult education in Tanzania, which focused on promoting intellectual and productive capabilities, was to make illiterate adults "new" human beings. Although the theoretical framework of the literacy campaign reflected all four perspectives, only the reduction of illiteracy was evident at the implementation level. Similarly, Nicaragua also mounted a nonformal adult education campaign with the aim of creating a new society in which people could determine their destiny through releasing their intellectual and technical capacities. A number of priority areas for learning such as raising participants' critical awareness, equipping them with necessary technical and vocational skills and involving them in carrying out basic needs-responsive developmental projects were identified. The architects of the campaign recognized the value of different perspectives; however, the emphasis of these perspectives separated during implementation and eventually only reducing illiteracy became prominent.

The lesson from these cases is that even if there is a realization of the value of the integration of various perspectives, there is a possibility that during the implementation process the broader perspective may be lost or deleted. Several factors seem to have contributed to this loss such as alienation of the prospective participants from the program planning process, reduction in the allocation of resources, inadequate human power, imposition of the program from above and more focus on ideological agendas than on the reality at the field level. An emphasis on literacy alone has tended to survive. There are instances in project level activities which appear to have become skewed towards conscientization or human resource development or rural development. Taking into consideration the problem of fragmentation of nonformal education programs in these countries, an important lesson for the Nepalese context is that if people are to be empowered both mentally and physically, a strong policy commitment to operationalizing comprehensive nonformal adult education programs by drawing on the four perspectives would be essential.

## Relevant Literature

Support for the integration of different philosophical orientations to nonformal adult education is evident in the literature. Reports of the Unesco World Conferences held in Tokyo (1972) and in Paris (1985) included various recommendations regarding learning needs of illiterate adults. Those reports emphasized the importance of making the learning of illiterate adults instrumental in developing their capabilities for improving their socio-economic conditions (Torres, 1988; Bhola, 1989). Developing critical, analytical and creative abilities in illiterate adults, improving their existence as empowered social beings, and enhancing their productivity must be the hub of nonformal adult education. The outcome of this approach to learning is associated with individual growth, social change and economic improvement.

Kassam (1982) argued that an effective form of nonformal adult education should stress an integrated approach that incorporates awareness raising, skill development and involvement of the support system at the program operation level. He felt this strategy to be important because "the relationship between education and development is multi-dimensional and therefore, depends on the interplay of a number of other factors and forces" (p. 155).

Zacharakis-Jutz (1988) argued that compartmentalizing nonformal adult education within a certain specific philosophy will simply narrow its scope resulting in rigid professionalization and institutionalization. In other words, nonformal adult education will become miniaturized within a specific discipline with reduced potential. According to Zacharakis-Jutz (1988) "adult education though professionalized, is losing its creativity as it becomes more and more identified as being a discipline as opposed to its multi-disciplinary heritage" (p. 44). In this statement the important phrase is "multi-disciplinary heritage" as far as education of illiterate adults is concerned. The reality of illiterate adults involves numerous unfulfilled basic needs, not just a single need. Therefore, the idea implicit in the above phrase relates to placing nonformal adult education within a holistic framework rather than confining it to a singular discipline. Aronowitz and Giroux (1985) offered a similar view suggesting that a multifaceted education would help students to achieve autonomy and creativity.

Conceptualization of nonformal adult education in a holistic fashion can also be traced to Habermas's three distinct but interrelated domains of learning: the technical, the practical and the emancipatory (Mezirow, 1981). The idea implicit in this view of education calls for an integration of different approaches and content in the adult education program for the purpose of energizing mental and manual capabilities of participants. Bacchus (1990) also suggested the need for three different knowledge categories -- empirical/analytical, "practical"/social and critical emancipatory -- with respect to curriculum development in developing countries. He stated, "For educators to be more effective in their work in the Third World countries, they need to be guided by all three areas of knowledge interests" (p. 299). In other words, educational programs must focus on integrating different knowledge interests in order to promote educational relevance and practicality. This concept suggests that an integration of various perspectives may be an effective approach to conceptualizing a framework for nonformal adult education.

A functionally sound framework of nonformal adult education seems to have potential for helping illiterate people overcome impediments on the way to a more humane condition of living. In contrast, a sound nonformal adult education framework cannot result from an alignment with a single perspective. In this connection, Ahmed (1985) argued that in order for the framework of nonformal adult education to be functionally promising, an emphasis on incorporating various components of learning ranging from critical awareness to the learning of skills and knowledge is essential.

## An Integrated Conceptual Base

As has been stated earlier, human creativity and productivity are crucial for dealing with a wretched situation. These capabilities tend to generate forces in human beings that counter various adverse influences on development. The major challenge, however, lies in designing and implementing compatible learning programs through the nonformal adult education strategy. A nonformal adult education program compatible with meeting basic developmental needs, specifically in the Nepalese context, can be discussed by drawing on the importance of the four theoretical perspectives that were developed in Chapter Three: radical emancipatory, liberal emancipatory, human resource development and rural development. A summary of the major ideas that have relevance for Nepal is presented in Table 5.

The radical perspective draws attention to participatory approaches, dialogical discourse, group dynamics and political struggle. In contrast to the usual emphasis on political action, the possibility of giving priority to peacefully organized movements for dealing with contradictions merits consideration. The liberal perspective suggests ideas relating to facilitative learning, unfolding of self-worth and recognition of personal entitlements. Both the human resource and rural development perspectives focus on productivity. The human resource development perspective suggests the inculcation of skills, exploitation of local resources and the creation of local economic opportunities. In contrast, the rural development perspective places more emphasis on developing infrastructures and collaborative relationships.

A framework of nonformal adult education that integrates various strengths of the radical perspective, the liberal perspective, the human resource development perspective and the rural development perspective appears to be promising for Nepal.

Table 5

Relevant Ideas of Each of the Perspectives on Nonformal Adult Education for Nepal

| Perspectives | Relevant Ideas for Nepal |
|---|---|
| Radical Emancipatory | Participatory approach to identifying generative themes linked to basic developmental needs and problems |
| | Dialogical discourse to reflect on the identified needs with the use of thematic materials |
| | Raising critical awareness |
| | Group dynamics for identifying resolutions and their enactment |
| | Priority to peaceful organized movement to deal with contradictions constructively |
| Liberal Emancipatory | Facilitative learning environment where participant-centered, self-directed learning is encouraged |
| | Unfolding one's own self-worth, self-abilities and self-power |
| | Recognition of personal entitlements |
| Human Resource Development | Productivity enhancement |
| | Promotion of occupational skills |
| | Skills that are useful to explore and exploit locally available resources |
| | Creating economic opportunities in the local context |
| Rural Development | Basic needs-responsive skill acquisition and application |
| | Use of existing infrastructure for acquiring services to respond to development-oriented learning and doing |
| | Creating new services centres for the same purpose |
| | Forging collaborative strategy among nongovernmental organizations, governmental organizations and locales |

## Radical and Liberal Perspectives

An individual focus on a particular perspective probably would be inadequate to help the illiterate people of Nepal. The liberal perspective which espouses ideals of promoting individuals' inner frontier might be helpful to a degree because it focuses more on a person-centred approach. In order to overcome a multitude of system-centred problems, the conscientization approach must also come into play. This will focus on involving people in critically reflecting on their needs and problems, identifying appropriate measures to counter them and taking the initiative to organize themselves in order to bring about desirable changes through remodifying their relationships with support institutions. Indications of how a combination of the liberal and radical perspectives might contribute to achieving a better human existence are summarized in Figure 1.

The advocates of the conscientization approach tend to assert that the purpose of this strategy is to create political awareness and to mount confrontation against an oppressively dominant system. Its application for the purpose of meeting basic developmental needs is not accepted on the ground that such an application would result in domestication. As Carr (1990) indicated, using conscientization without political opposition constrains liberation.

There are many poor countries like Nepal in which people exist in deplorable conditions. People living in such situations must be activated to transform the destitute reality. The potential of the conscientization approach for making people aware and active in dealing with basic development problems cannot be discounted.

Some examples from the Nepalese context may illustrate the point. Unaware of hygienic value and unmindful of the importance of better health and sanitary practices for children, the people do not use pit-latrines even if they are constructed. Due to the lack of critical perception, water pipelines may be cut randomly if water is needed at a particular place. In a context such as this, what elements of "domestication" would seep into the lives

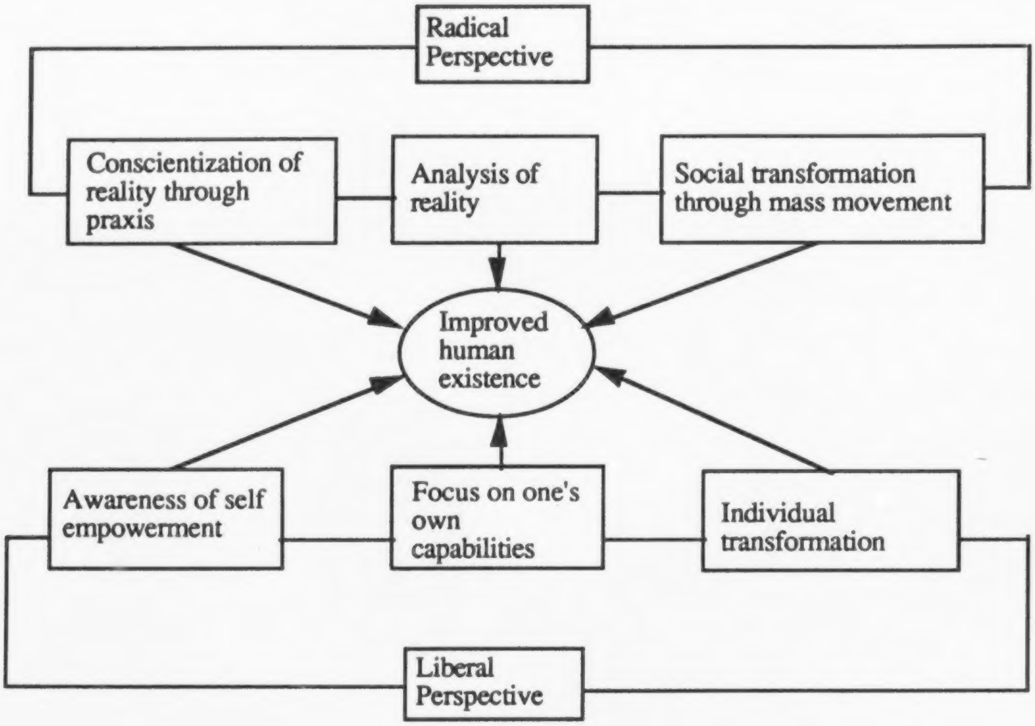
Radical Perspective
Conscientization of reality through praxis
Analysis of reality
Social transformation through mass movement
Improved human existence
Awareness of self empowerment
Focus on one's own capabilities
Individual transformation
Liberal Perspective

Figure 1
Interaction of Radical and Liberal Perspectives

of people if they were to be made aware of and led to deal with these basic impediments through conscientization? Application of conscientization to help people develop basic human qualities would not reduce its meaning and value. The argument presented here does not intend to negate the political significance of conscientization but to relate its significance to basic development needs. Action at a political level may be reasonable at a later stage.

The extent to which political agitation through conscientization can be instrumental in bringing about desired changes depends on the nature of a society. For example, in the Nepalese society -- which is exceedingly docile, fatalistic and submissive, and which values harmony, adjustability, peaceful living and negotiated settlement of issues -- agitation and violence would be destructive. Involvement of the illiterate poor, who lack even basic human qualities, in a politically instigated agitation would be an act of immaturity that is likely to create a situation in which not the poverty but the poor themselves would be affected. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that a desired change is attainable through violent opposition, for violence begets more violence and instability. Questioning the validity of political agitation as a means for change, Hart (1990) commented that an educator does not have to rely only on political opposition to contradict and counteract dominant power. What forms of action are appropriate or viable depend upon the specifics of social, historical and institutional circumstances. In a society where the history of nonviolence is predominant, the existing socio-economic contradictions may be countered through people's organized movement inspired by a constructive philosophy based on rational analysis oriented towards mutual understanding and negotiated settlement of problems.

Some authors have argued in support of an anti-radical approach to reaching the goal of structural transformation. Ellsworth (1989) stressed the need for new forms of collective struggle that do not rely upon repression and violence, but draw on the basis of harmony of interests. For instance, the poor people's common interests of meeting survival needs could forge a strong unity. The social cohesion emerged out of such unity would increase pressure on the dominant structure and its supporters to be more concerned with what people want. Hart (1990) indicated that radical emancipatory education must not only question the immorality of power, but also nurture a new morality of non-radicalism and a non-oppressive caring relationship among participants. Holzman (1988) agreed with the non-revolutionary way of implementing conscientization, basically by focusing on needs and problems embedded in the daily lives of people.

Both liberal and radical perspectives contain ideas that provide a useful basis for the design of nonformal adult education for Nepal. Basically, the importance of self-growth as advocated by the liberal perspective and the critical reflection on reality followed by a contextually suitable strategy for change as derived from the radical perspective would offer a powerful blend to widen the mental horizons of illiterate adults.

## Development Perspectives

The ability of people to achieve tangible changes and real improvement in their lives results not only from their intellectual power but also from the acquisition and application of relevant skills. The human resource development and rural development perspectives focus on these aspects of development. In Nepal's rural context, nonformal adult education programs must draw on these perspectives, because self-power and knowledge of reality must be realized through actions for which skills and techniques with material and infrastructural support are essential. Figure 2 sketches the interactive relationship between human resource and rural development perspectives in helping the poor.

Realization of self-ability to improve one's own occupation and awareness of the existing reality needs reinforcement through skill and technical training. From this arises the relevance of human resource development. In Nepal, the rural poor carry out subsidiary occupations other than agriculture such as tailoring, leather work, carpentry, masonry, smithery and pottery. From a human resource development perspective, if the skill and the level of technical competence of these various occupational groups were to be enhanced, they would be able to earn more. Similarly, learning skills linked to carrying out small local construction projects as well as other projects aimed at producing daily consumption goods and services based on use of available natural resources would provide income generating opportunities. Human resource development in the Nepalese rural context does not necessarily have to do with the preparation of advanced level skilled human power for the purpose of competing in the job market. Instead, this could orient and enable the poor rural occupational groups to develop some competence so that they can explore and use natural resources and opportunities within their own surrounding environment for the improvement of their lives.

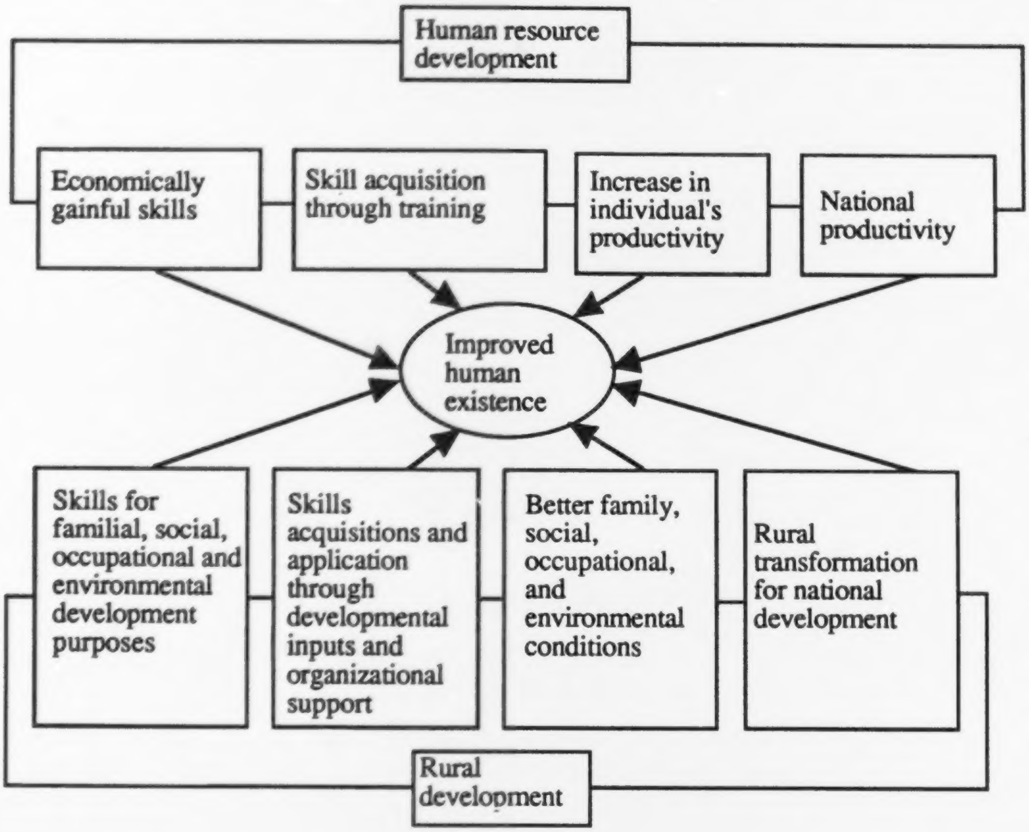
Human resource development
Economically gainful skills
Skill acquisition through training
Increase in individual's productivity
National productivity
Improved human existence
Skills for familial, social, occupational and environmental development purposes
Skills acquisitions and application through developmental inputs and organizational support
Better family, social, occupational, and environmental conditions
Rural transformation for national development
Rural development

Figure 2
Interaction of Human Resources and Rural Development Perspectives

Linked closely to the human resource development perspective is the rural development perspective, which emphasizes not only the need for skill development but also the application of skills in dealing with basic family, societal, occupational, environmental and health needs. The rural development perspective recognizes the importance of the operationalization of skills. The nonformal adult education program in Nepal strongly needs this component, because the rural people's ability to translate acquired skills and knowledge into reality exists at a low level as a result of their appalling economic conditions. If learning is not followed up with appropriate infrastructural and material support, it will create only frustrations among the poor. Therefore, the rural development perspective provides the important focus on reorienting and reactivating existing rural development institutions and creating new ones as are necessary through a collaborative effort between the government and the communities or other nongovernmental organizations. This approach would complete the circle of learning and would help narrow the gap existing between people and institutions. A real dynamism energized in this fashion has potential to create opportunities for the entire local context to improve.

Integrated Perspective

With a focus on these requirements of learning for the empowerment of the illiterate adults of Nepal, a conceptual framework of nonformal adult education, basically drawing on the essence of the four major perspectives is proposed. Figure 3 depicts this framework.

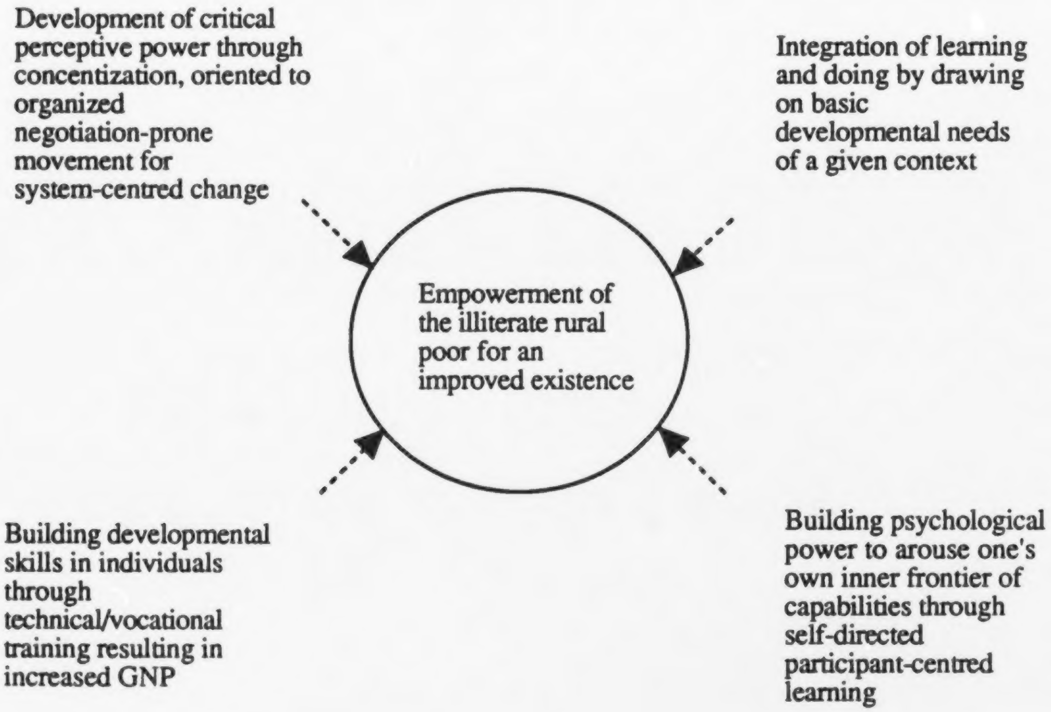
Development of critical perceptive power through concentization, oriented to organized negotiation-prone movement for system-centred change
Integration of learning and doing by drawing on basic developmental needs of a given context
Empowerment of the illiterate rural poor for an improved existence
Building developmental skills in individuals through technical/vocational training resulting in increased GNP
Building psychological power to arouse one's own inner frontier of capabilities through self-directed participant-centred learning

Figure 3
Integrated Empowerment Framework of Nonformal Adult Education

In the figure the circle represents an integrated approach to nonformal adult education aimed at empowering illiterate rural adults who live in poverty. This framework is a function of each of the four specific perspectives on nonformal adult education. The absence of even one of the perspectives disturbs the framework by making it incomplete. In such a situation, empowerment would be a difficult outcome to achieve.

Generally, the meaning of empowerment, as it relates to the illiterate rural adult population of Nepal, provides a sense of generating various abilities for achieving humane qualities of living. In this connection, forms of empowerment may be envisaged differently such as empowerment through fostering critical perceptive ability, empowerment through recognizing one's own innate talents and self-worth, empowerment through acquiring socially and economically gainful skills, and empowerment through implementing the acquired skills by closing the gap which exists between people and services. In other words, empowerment acquired through these learning strategies of nonformal adult education has potential to promote mental and manual skills and efficiencies for making the future of poverty stricken people hopeful and humane.

Empowerment of the poor illiterate population of Nepal is the philosophical orientation of this conceptual framework. For this purpose, instead of leaning dogmatically towards one or the other perspective, a pragmatic focus has been placed on integrating various relevant ideas of all perspectives to evolve a basis for learning that increasingly tends to attain improved existence of human beings by capacitating them intellectually and technically. Such capacitation is crucial to arousing people's maturity in terms of thinking and acting. Empowerment is an important determinant of the evolution of a strong democratic culture that facilitates the growth of social energy which is a prerequisite for total development.

Generally, the oppression of poor people is attributable to their vulnerability because they lack intellectual development and also to the control exercised over them by dominant groups for the purpose of retaining power and privileges. A radical approach to nonformal adult education directed at countering oppression may lead to violence and even armed struggle. Although radical approaches may be justifiable in some contexts, in others they may prove more hazardous than helpful. Specifically, in those contexts where people's religious beliefs, values, social outlook, and world view are incompatible with radicalism, the adoption of a radical learning approach could have far more negative than positive outcomes. This would likely be the case in the Nepalese context.

In a social reality such as that of Nepal, the approach to educating people should focus on unleashing their potential and capabilities. Helping them to realize their worth and abilities through discourse and dialogue is likely to create a congenial environment for positive change. Capacitation of people through this strategy of learning may also generate in them the power to become organized and involved in challenging oppressive processes and practices.

The proposed conceptual framework recognizes the importance of capacitating nonformal education participants in terms of developing their strengths and talents along with organized movements for emancipation and growth. This strategy may lead people to deal with the oppressive forces in a constructive manner. Meanwhile, their productivity will be raised through learning activities directed at developing work-related skills. To characterize the framework in few words, it is both a person-centred and a system-oriented approach which appears promising for addressing basic development needs in Nepal.

## Summary

Development is a function of human beings; therefore, people are at centre stage in the process of development. In order to enable people to play their part significantly, development of their mental and manual powers is critically important. An integrated framework of nonformal adult education oriented toward empowering people is proposed for the purpose of dealing with their basic needs and problems. Support for this concept comes from the prospect of raising the critical awareness of the participants of their needs and problems. It will emphasize learning which arouses their perceptions of themselves as human beings with self-power and dignity. In addition, acquisition of necessary skills and provision of material resources for applying them are other important focuses. Perceptions of the respondents in the field study, case analysis of different countries and ideas of various authors provide support for an integrated approach to nonformal adult education in Nepal.

# CHAPTER 11

# PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The integrated empowerment framework of nonformal adult education as presented in the preceding chapter was developed on the basis of a critical analysis and subsequent synthesis of various ideas from four different perspectives, from case analysis of three different countries and from an examination of the Nepalese context. The suitability of this framework for empowering rural illiterate adults in Nepal to address basic developmental needs could be ascertained only after putting it to a test in some rural part of the country. Implementation of the framework on a pilot basis would be advisable, for which a commensurate planning process will be necessary. This chapter is devoted to developing the basis for implementation in relation to various aspects of the planning process.

## Concept of Planning

From a rational perspective, planning is recognized as a "navigational" process through which organizations are guided in the right direction, without chaos and confusion, to achieve their goals effectively. Planning approaches are diverse: consequently, there are inconsistencies across definitions. However, certain ideas such as means, alternative choices, goals, future orientations and preparation for future events constitute common elements of the planning process. As a result of considering different definitions of planning and also its common elements, (Miklos, 1972) presented a comprehensive definition as follows:

> Planning is best conceptualized as one aspect of the decision process...which involves (1) the identification and refinement of alternative goals; (2) the development of alternative means; (3) the identification of the most promising (most efficient and effective) means...(4) monitoring the extent to which goals have been achieved; and (5) on the basis of information gained, revising means and possible goals or targets. (pp. 6-7)

These broad elements of planning are also evident in a planning perspective on adult education. Identifying planning as a future-oriented activity, Bonne (1985) argued that an adult education plan should include a proactive rather than reactive approach, help enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the program, be collaborative and be oriented towards choosing alternative means and priorities on the basis of needs analysis. Based on this setting of the plan formulation, the approach to planning of nonformal adult education should visualize alternative goals, identify relevant means, envisage monitoring and evaluating and use feedback to make necessary corrections in the entire process.

## Specific Aspects of Planning

The conceptual ingredients of planning establish the basis for identifying planning parameters. As regards identification of the parameters of planning for the implementation of the integrated framework of nonformal adult education, Bourgette's (1972) recommendations with respect to a number of factors -- need, objectives, activities and processes, structures, outcomes or products and problems -- appear to be helpful.

### Need

The design of the integrated framework of nonformal adult education is intended to lead to empowering illiterate adults in rural Nepal. In other words, this conceptualization draws on the understanding of inefficacy of learning programs for these people in terms of improving their living conditions. Application of the framework will help to identify several ways for strengthening the concept and, consequently, will add more ways to make it effective. Conceptual enrichment is affected mostly by the cyclical process of reality-concept-reality (Freire & Faundez, 1989). In relation to this cycle, the conceptual framework suggested here, which draws on various perspectives, needs to be put into practice in order to develop the concept further so that it becomes increasingly responsive to the existing realities.

## Goal and Objectives

The major goal of the implementation plan is to test the conceptual framework in a rural situation in relation to the question of whether it can be instrumental to achieve an improved situation. Included in this major goal are several objectives such as conceptualization of structural arrangements, identification of resource bases, designing and implementing programs and revising the goal based on the feedback.

## Structural Arrangement

The responsibility for implementing the plan has to be borne by some organizations. As regards the new conceptual framework of nonformal adult education, organizations which are involved in developmental research activities seem to be potential implementors. In the present context in Nepal, many nongovernmental organizations are involved in rural development programs through nonformal education. Similarly, there are research institutes functioning under Tribhuvan University, which are engaged in carrying out development-oriented educational research. These organizations, therefore, are promising agencies for field testing the framework. The role of potential organizations will have to be viewed as that of sponsors.

As the implementation takes place at the grassroots level, sponsors will have to be increasingly concerned with assessing field realities, mobilizing services of various delivery agencies and diffusing program activities to different areas. In order to address these and other emerging needs in more concerted and effective ways, rural development centres will have to be established. The main function of these centres will be to acquire human and physical resources, to make systematic arrangements for their meaningful and justifiable use and to diffuse them to various communities within the scope of the respective rural development centres.

In order to enable rural development centres to discharge these responsibilities effectively, a local level program steering committee should be established. This committee's main responsibilities will include decision making, formulating program operation guidelines and mobilizing resources, and more importantly, developing a process for the self-sustenance of the program. The composition of the program steering committee should include members representing field level professionals of sponsoring organizations, local level development staff of the government agencies, field personnel of nongovernmental organizations and community representatives. For the effective management of this committee, the number of members should be fixed at a certain limit in order to ensure a good mix of representatives. In this connection, attention should be given to identifying representatives mainly from rural development-focused programs such as forestry, health care, environmental conservation, agriculture, family planning and child care and cottage industries. In the same way, identification of local representatives will have to be made from among the target groups on the basis of their position, reputation, personal influence, leadership skill, social participation and experience in decision-making processes (Bonne, 1985).

Formation of the program steering committee with representatives from various quarters will help not only to create an effective force for the implementation of the framework but also to maintain a balanced approach to forging cooperation among various role players. Such an approach will avoid favoring one group against another. In other words, a political strategy in the planning process will help the program to succeed (Benveniste, 1989).

Instituted in an integrated form, the program steering committee will also have potential for generating benefits of the multiplier effect (Benveniste, 1989). On the basis of their capacity as representatives of respective organizations, the members of the steering committee should communicate with other similar organizations elsewhere for the purpose of soliciting necessary cooperation in giving more impetus to the operation of the program. In addition, the program steering committee will be in a position to become involved in networking (Benveniste, 1989) with other organizations within and outside of the country for generating resources, both financial and expert services.

### Program Design and Implementation

Several steps underlie the program design and implementation aspect. In order to create a congenial implementation environment, it will be necessary to focus on numerous processes. Essentially, these processes must be based on a consideration of the environment in question, people to be addressed, available resources and other kinds of support, and ways to examine the outcomes.

Making an entry point. Arousing the confidence and optimism of the target groups is crucial, because these elements are increasingly helpful in raising intrinsic motivation. In order to be able to create such a situation, the program sponsors will have to be aware of what problems and needs are urgent in the context where the program is to be implemented. Some action to demonstrate to the target groups that there are solutions which address their problems should be initiated. Such action should help to convince people that the program is for their benefit and that to be involved with the sponsors in the operation of the program will bring increased benefits. Moreover, this opportunity will also reassure them that there are programs which really care about their concerns. As the target groups start placing more faith in the program, a strengthening relationship between the program sponsors and the target groups is likely to be engendered. Any negative effect of previous experience may start to fade away. For the effective implementation of the framework, barriers due to lack of faith among the target groups must be removed with the initiation of real action at the outset. In other words, an effective entry is essential for ensuring people's continued belief in the program.

Needs assessment. Identification of an effective entry point will most likely engender confidence and optimism among the target groups which will motivate them to initiate dialogue with program sponsors. This context is very important for beginning the needs assessment activity. An informal discussion may be started with people so as to identify what needs and problems are most urgent in their living conditions and the environment. Group dynamics generated through discussion, interpersonal interactions, and exchange of experiences and ideas will make an effective strategy for assessing needs. While assessing needs and problems, the role of program sponsors will have to be facilitative in terms of furthering analytical discussions among the group members and coming up with commonly agreed real and urgent needs. Such a participatory approach will involve the target groups as subjects of themselves and arouse their interest. As opposed to the conventional practice of needs assessment, where the role of the program sponsors outweighs that of the target groups, leaving space to doubt the authenticity of what has been assessed, the participatory approach allows the target groups to exercise their rights to uncover their own reality.

Program formulation. The program formulation activity will have to be carried out in a manner consistent with the identified needs and problems. Here again, the target groups' role must be in the forefront. The group must make a major contribution to conceptualizing programs in order of priority, locating human and material resources available within their own context, identifying the number of people to be involved in each specific program, deciding what other programs are needed, acquiring necessary inputs, and deciding the time, venue and operational mode of the program. An opportunity to play a leading role in formulating programs will tend to generate in them the feeling of ownership of the program. Development of a sense of ownership among the target groups has potential to augment their real participation in activities, to build leadership skills, to enhance self-reliance and to remove the attitude of helplessness and dependency.

Program implementation. For an effective program implementation, both the educational inputs and the physical inputs will be of considerable significance. Educational inputs will involve the target groups in experiencing intellectual matters, whereas the physical inputs will enable them to translate their intellectual achievements into real life action. The interaction between intellectual and physical inputs will constitute a force to address various important needs associated with basic development of the target groups. Which type of the input should come first will depend upon the context in question. There need not be a sequential process to using educational and physical inputs. Sometimes, given the urgency of the need to be addressed, learning activities may begin with the application of physical inputs and eventually end up with intellectual matters. At other times, intellectual processes will be followed by manual work. In any case, engendering the target groups' empowerment for dealing with their needs and problems requires both components.

Facilitators and training. Facilitators will have to be identified by consensus of the participants. Depending upon the situation, facilitators could be obtained from the formal system; for example, primary school teachers in rural areas could be involved as potential facilitators. In addition, other people with certain skills and experience such as army retirees, local artisans, progressive farmers, social workers and community leaders may be able to serve as facilitators. The role of facilitator will, in addition to working with the program participants as a guide, be also that of change agent, catalyst and educator. To enable them to perform such multiple roles, they will require professionally sound training organized by the agency or agencies sponsoring the programs. Elements of the training should focus on leadership skills, negotiating skills, cooperative skills, accommodating skills, and relevant attitudinal skills in gathering, understanding and disseminating information. Facilitators' training should be built-in as a continuous activity in the operation framework, because the success of the program is affected largely by their motivation, conviction and commitment. Another important factor which tends to determine the identification of facilitators with the program involves recognition of their contributions by the community, including the provisions for certain amounts of remuneration.

Identification of participants. Educationally deprived and socio-economically disadvantaged rural adults of both sexes and different ethnic groups residing in a rural context will be the main program participants. Such heterogeneous groups of participants may form effective sources of learning, since some will bring with them a wealth of experiences. Group dynamics among the participants will help them to come to understand each other's abilities and expertise, thereby offering a better chance for effective learning.

Learning resources. Participants' experiences form an important source of learning. Depicting their ideas and reflections in audio-visual forms will provide the basis for analytical discussions. Environmental needs and problems also offer a prospect for practical learning. Similarly, in order to address other life-related learning needs such as improved cultivation, home environment, health care, productive skills, sanitation and nutrition, the households of participants, their land and their living conditions will make appropriate learning resources. Materials produced under various rural development projects will also contribute to serving as learning resources. Specific resources required for skill application can be obtained from rural development agencies, program sponsors and other similar sources. An increasing focus on participants' life experiences and surrounding environment will have to be given priority followed by developmental input support. This strategy for resource acquisition will activate developmental learning from within the context itself. Furthermore, it will help reinforce positive interaction between internal and external resources.

Program assessment. Correction of weaknesses and initiating an impetus for improvement are necessary steps toward program effectiveness. For this purpose, a continuous process of program assessment is essential. Assessment of programs should not be the sole responsibility of the program sponsors. Involvement of participants is necessary for making this activity effective; hence, there is need for participatory assessment of the program. The program strategy should be comprehensive in the sense that all participants have equal opportunity for expressing their comments and reactions regarding what has been achieved, what has not been achieved, and why. To ensure that assessment is participatory, community level conferences involving program participants should be organized frequently. In general, an emphasis must be placed on eliciting participants' views, reactions, comments and suggestions.

## Scope of Planning

The aim of the integrated framework of nonformal adult education is to help illiterate rural adults learn and apply knowledge and skills which are largely responsive to addressing their basic developmental needs and problems. As a result, the implementation focus of the framework, which is oriented towards the grassroots level, should be worked out at a local level. As Evans (1981) has suggested, planning at the field or community level would be more effective in achieving desired outcomes. Large scale centralized planning processes, although important in terms of the national initiative, tend eventually to dissipate as a result of the problem of management. Furthermore, central control provides privileges and power to the authorities which may influence them to overlook the potential local contribution with the result that the whole planning begins to drift. As is evident from the case studies of the Tanzanian and Nicaraguan literacy campaigns, the centralized planning process eventually turned out to be unrealistic and unmanageable. Consequently, few corrections were made in the later stage in order to accommodate the local reality by acknowledging the importance of decentralized participatory planning. In this connection, speaking about the value of decentralized participatory planning, Evans (1981) stated:

> Participatory planning helps to develop skills in the learners; motivates them to complete the training; and can help to ensure the maximum relevance of the contents to the needs of the learners. If planning for nonformal education becomes a highly centralized process and programs are

> implemented in the same fashion, nonformal education will lose much of its comparative strengths in contrast to the formal system. (p. 80)

## Problems and Possible Solutions

Decentralized participatory planning looks promising but is not without challenges. Various problems impede the planning process. First, the major problem lies in maximizing real and authentic participation of the target groups or participants. Without intrinsic motivation, no such participation evolves. Second, the responsibilities of facilitators are enormous. A facilitator is expected to perform as an educator, a change agent, and a leader as well as a catalyst. The extent to which facilitators are able to meet all of these expectations will be a measure of their suitability for the role. Third, inter-organizational coordination is also a difficult problem; although much talked about, it is seldom achieved in reality. At issue is the argument which is frequently raised by noneducational institutions regarding the practicality of their involvement in support of adults' learning activities. Fourth, vested interest groups and the local politically opposed groups may tend to exploit the program to serve their personal interests. Fifth, inadequacy of resources is another major problem; resources tend to be meagre even for meeting basic expenses such as facilitators' remuneration and production of learning materials.

These problems and issues have existed as regular features in the nonformal adult education program in Nepal. Addressing these challenges seems to be an important task of program sponsors. Greater responsibilities will have to be borne by sponsors in order to minimize these impediments. Moreover, they need to play multiple roles such as resourceful individual, effective manager, good negotiator, and imaginative and professional administrator. In a country like Nepal, resource constraint is a permanent problem. If, on the grounds of this constraint, steps were not to be taken for innovative programs, stagnation will further deepen in the development process. Therefore, there is a need to strive optimistically to bring about improvements in the living conditions of people. The most important factor in this connection is a selfless, dedicated and an honest service motive on the part of program sponsors. In the absence of these qualities, no achievement of any kind can be made in spite of adequate resources and a good working environment. If responsibility bearers were to devote themselves to the noble cause with conviction, positive attitudes, dedication, sincerity and faith in fellow human beings, no constraints would deter the process of development.

## Summary

Planning involves a number of processes and activities directed at changing the existing situation into some state that is more desirable. Following this concept of planning, various steps have been suggested to implement the integrated framework of nonformal adult education in the rural context of Nepal. Among these decentralized planning appears to be particularly significant. Problems and constraints exist as regular phenomena in the planning and implementation process. Nevertheless, a spirit of optimism must pervade the process to enhance the prospect that development will occur.

# CHAPTER 12

# CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter begins with a statement of purpose and research strategies followed by a summary of results. The summary section is based on responses to the research questions that relate to the concept of nonformal education, theoretical perspectives, experiences in selected countries, nonformal education in Nepal, proposed conceptual framework and approach to implementation. A section on implications focuses on development of the concept, implementation of nonformal education, and further research in nonformal education. The chapter concludes with reflections on the research project

## Purpose and Research Strategies

The general purpose of the study was to develop a conceptual framework for the further development of nonformal adult education in Nepal. Although nonformal education is not new to that context, there are numerous indications that renewed efforts based on a sound conceptual basis are required if the potential of nonformal education is to be realized to a greater degree in future than in the past. There is an urgent need in Nepal, as in many other countries, for implementing educational programs designed to improve the social and economic circumstances of disadvantaged and deprived adult members of the society. In a limited way, this report may provide an impetus for further thought and action on nonformal adult education in Nepal.

Six objectives guided the general development of the study:

1. to define and explain the concept of nonformal education;
2. to examine critically selected theoretical perspectives on nonformal education;
3. to describe and analyze specific examples of nonformal education in selected countries;

4. to review critically the nature of nonformal education in Nepal;

5. to propose a conceptual framework for the further development of nonformal education in Nepal; and,

6. to outline an approach to implementing the proposed framework for nonformal education.

In relation to each of these objectives, a number of specific research questions were defined to focus the research procedures. The research questions are identified in the summary of the study presented in the following section.

The study progressed through a number of distinct phases, each of which involved a particular research strategy. In the first phase, relevant literature on nonformal education in general and on four major theoretical perspectives in particular was reviewed and analyzed. The review provided the alternative philosophical orientations that might be used singly or in combination as the basis for developing nonformal adult education programs. The next stage comprised a review of the experiences with implementing nonformal education in three contexts similar to that of Nepal: Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua. The major sources of data for these case analyses were books and other documentary materials available in the University of Alberta library.

Following completion of the documentary-based research, a field study was conducted in Nepal to determine the present state of nonformal adult education, the need for further development and the prospects for future initiatives. Data were collected through analysis of documentary materials as well as through questionnaires and interviews. In total, interview or questionnaires data were collected from nine policy makers, seven individuals associated with the implementation of nonformal education programs, seven facilitators and thirteen program participants. Both questionnaire and interview data were translated from Nepali into English by the researcher.

The selected sources of data proved to be adequate for achieving the objectives of the study. Methods of analysis appropriate for qualitative data obtained from documents, from open-ended questionnaires items and through interviews were used to answer the specific research questions. In general, the research strategy could be described as critical-analytical. Concepts derived from various sources were examined critically for their potential to contribute to the desired outcomes of the analysis and then synthesized in order to develop the conceptual framework for nonformal adult education and an approach to program implementation.

## Summary of Results

The outcomes of the study consist of ideas, concepts and perspectives that relate to the main objectives of the study. As has been indicated, these objectives focused attention on the concept of nonformal education, on selected theoretical perspectives, on experiences with nonformal education in three countries as well as Nepal, and on developing a conceptual framework and an approach to implementation procedures. The outcomes are summarized as responses to the research questions associated with each objective.

### Concept of Nonformal Education

1.1. What are the general features of nonformal education? How does it differ from formal education?

1.2. What are the essential characteristics of nonformal education in terms of actors, structures, and educational processes?

Nonformal education is an approach to learning that is provided in a planned and deliberate manner outside of the formal structure and curriculum to address educational needs of disadvantaged and deprived people. As the concept of nonformal education has evolved, the nature, objectives and characteristics have been subjected to intensive analysis. According to one perspective, nonformal education cannot function as a separate entity because an organic relationship exists between nonformal and alternative approaches to learning such as formal and informal education. Depending upon the context in which learning activities are conducted, informal and formal modes of learning may be part of the operation of nonformal education programs.

In recent years, the concept of nonformal education has been enriched and strengthened by the view that education is a lifelong process of learning. In addition, an increasing emphasis has been placed on mutual collaboration between the learners and facilitators for the purpose of determining learning needs and strategies. Further conceptual clarity between nonformal and adult education has resulted from focusing on the similarities and dissimilarities between them. Differences in contexts, objectives and methods contribute to differences between the approaches to learning.

## Theoretical Perspectives

2.1. What are the major conceptual or theoretical perspectives on nonformal education?

2.2. What are the characteristics of these perspectives in terms of their philosophical bases, assumptions/values, methodologies and outcomes?

2.3. What environmental or contextual factors are compatible with each perspective?

Nonformal education programs tend to reflect varying degrees of emphasis on four different theoretical perspectives: the radical emancipatory, the liberal emancipatory, the human resource development and the rural development perspectives. Each of these is characterized by a particular philosophy, values, assumptions and methods that are oriented toward helping people to achieve a better condition of living. The emancipatory perspectives focus on mental capacitation of poor illiterate people while the development perspectives emphasize the need for equipping them with various skills aimed at improving the material conditions of living. In spite of basic differences, the major goal of all four perspectives is to bring about qualitative change in the lives of deprived and disadvantaged people.

Experiences in Selected Contexts

3.1. What types or forms of nonformal education have been attempted in selected countries?

3.2. What means or strategies were used in implementing and delivering nonformal education?

3.3. What are the outcomes or consequences of the initiatives?

3.4. What implications might be drawn from these experiences for nonformal education in Nepal?

The case analyses of nonformal adult education in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Nicaragua provide a broad spectrum of experiences. The Bangladesh experience shows that both government and nongovernment organizations have initiated and continued the operation of nonformal adult education programs. The major objective of these programs is to promote human development through raising people's level of critical awareness and productivity, in addition to reducing illiteracy. In attempting to achieve this objective, nonformal adult education programs oriented to all four theoretical perspectives seem to have been implemented. Although basing programs on different perspectives was an important step, an integrated approach to program planning and delivery was absent. The philosophical orientation of program sponsors led to compartmentalizing the program focus within a specific perspective.

The Tanzanian case provides an example of the situation in which the government had a strong commitment to combating ignorance, disease and hunger through the expansion of nonformal adult education. President Nyerere's total support for eradicating illiteracy and promoting people's self-reliance involved a range of state agencies in mounting a literacy campaign. In order to meet the goal of self-reliance and socialism, attention was given to including awareness raising and productive skill development components in the program. Various innovative projects were also implemented with a view to achieving the goal. The level of international support contributed to the achievement of a dramatic reduction in illiteracy. However, the program was unable to enjoy a similar level of achievement in relation to the goal of increased self-reliance. A wide array of problems related to human and material resources, to the planning approach, and to politicization of the program created difficulties in achieving the intended goal. Nonetheless, the state's affirmation of alleviating poverty through learning activities was a significant development in the general area of nonformal education.

The Nicaraguan case offers an interesting scenario because nonformal education was undertaken with the intent of renewing the society. The literacy crusade, which was the major focus of the nonformal education program, could be viewed as a second "mass insurrection" after the success of the Sandinista-led revolution. The goal of the crusade was not only to combat illiteracy but also to make people critically aware, socially active, economically productive and culturally enriched. The revolutionary government used all available resources to attain the goal. Among the positive outcomes, reduction in the illiteracy rate was significant. However, there was limited success in achieving the goal of developing "new" people for the creation and sustenance of a "new" society. Critiques have identified shortcomings such as the following: the planning approach lacked practicality, competent human resources were in short supply, material resources were inadequate and the program was over politicized.

## Nonformal Education in Nepal

4.1. How has nonformal education evolved in Nepal?

4.2. What types of program activities have been implemented?

4.3. What factors account for the success or lack of success of various program activities?

4.4. What are the implications of these experiences for future policy decisions?

The Nepalese context provides a long history of nonformal education in which activities have taken different forms. Each successive phase presents some evidence of progress, specifically in terms of addressing basic development needs of people. However, further steps seem to be necessary in order to make the programs more effective. One step would be to review and to renew the program focus. In this connection, views of policy makers as well as of individuals associated with program implementation suggest that acquisition of literacy knowledge alone would not suffice to address various development problems. Since poverty appears to be a function of the mental and manual deficiencies of people, a broader orientation is needed in order to enhance people's critical intellectual capabilities as well as to help them to acquire and to apply productive skills.

Respondents in all categories felt that comprehensive nonformal adult education programs inclusive of awareness raising, literacy training, income generating as well as other social, physical and environmental skills need to be emphasized. The various skills are considered to be highly relevant for rural development. Policy level respondents recommended that the current nonformal adult education policy be changed to reflect the importance of comprehensive nonformal adult education programs. They also stressed the need to de-emphasize the top-down process of policy making in favor of a more participatory approach. Policy makers believed that such an approach to policy development would make the program more relevant, realistic and need-responsive.

## Proposed Conceptual Framework

5.1. What are the development needs of Nepal which might be addressed through nonformal adult education?

5.2. What type of conceptual framework of nonformal adult education is most likely to help illiterate adults to address their basic development needs and related problems?

5.3. What is the potential compatibility/incompatibility of each of the perspectives analyzed previously with the Nepalese context?

5.4. What might be a relevant conceptual and operational framework for nonformal education in Nepal?

Based on the analysis of four theoretical perspectives on nonformal education, on the case studies of the three countries, on the study of the Nepalese context and on ideas of various authors, a conceptual framework for the further development of nonformal adult education has been proposed. The philosophical basis of this framework is to empower illiterate people of Nepal to live a humane life through raising their critical awareness, developing in them economic productivity, increasing their involvement in society and enriching their cultural activities. As a result of the impact of the people-oriented philosophy, the participants are more likely to be able to overcome various challenges associated with development such as low productivity, an increased rate of population growth, impediments to access to education, deterioration of environment, lack of health care, and dysfunctional social values and institutions.

Achieving the goal of empowering people will require compatible methodological approaches focused on unleashing their creative, analytical and constructive capabilities. Various methods such as conducting discourse, emphasizing partnerships in learning, focusing on the need for sharing experiences and ideas, and also involving people in acquiring as well as applying productive skills are essential. Flexibility is necessary in order to adjust the strategies and methods in accordance with emerging needs.

## Implementation Approach

6.1. What structures or agencies should be involved in planning implementation?

6.2. What planning process should be used?

6.3. What should be the scope of planning?

6.4. What should be the assessment process?

### 6.5. What should be the approach to addressing issues?

Planning is a crucial step in achieving the goal of the proposed conceptual framework of nonformal adult education. Primarily, effective planning involves identifying various aspects such as needs, goals and objectives, structural arrangements, activities and processes, and outcomes or products. In order to implement the framework, the planning approach should focus on these aspects and also on several others that are contextually relevant.

In order to ensure implementation of the framework, appropriate arrangement of structures will be necessary. To some extent, the existing governmental and nongovernmental agencies fulfill the structural need. However, an increased emphasis should be placed on involving grassroots level agencies along with the participation of target groups. Another important aspect of planning is related to the identification of activities and processes. This aspect underlies several steps such as finding an effective entry point, assessing needs, formulating and implementing programs, recruiting and training personnel, identifying participants and learning resources, and assessing the outcomes.

A participatory approach to planning is essential in order to ensure effective implementation of programs. An emphasis on this approach requires mutual interaction of people and their involvement in sharing experiences. Ideas enriched through collective efforts are likely to contribute to generating positive outcomes.

Another important concern is the "scope of planning." Concerns about the dimensions of the plan need to be addressed. With respect to planning for the implementation of the framework, a micro planning effort is advisable. Experience has shown that macro plans, although they seem reasonable theoretically, usually result in negative outcomes, mainly because of management and resource problems.

There is no guarantee that even well formulated plans will produce positive results. Many problems emerge once plans start to operate; therefore, planning should be responsive to emerging needs.

## Implications

A number of implications are suggested by the outcomes of the study. The major ones relate to the further development of the conceptual scope of nonformal education, to the implementation of nonformal adult education programs in Nepal and in similar contexts, and to further research.

### Development of the Concept

Education did not take a formalized form in early civilizations. With the passage of time, educational values and norms started to change resulting in a more formal and prescriptive focus. This development might be considered positive in a way. In other respects it failed to solve numerous problems of learning and the problems continued to increase. Consequently, educators began to give attention to conceptualizing new learning approaches which eventually took the form of the concept of nonformal education.

Today, nonformal education is receiving considerable attention in developing countries. Since flexibility is one of its important characteristics, nonformal education is conducted with publicly agreed objectives and methods that are oriented to addressing various life skills. Various studies and research projects have enriched and strengthened nonformal education. As a consequence, the potential contribution of nonformal education to reducing the problem of illiteracy, to raising people's productivity, and to raising their level of critical awareness is being realized. Nevertheless, in order to make nonformal adult education a real force for change and progress, a shift in emphasis is required. Nonformal adult education must be recognized as being equal in importance to formal education. Allocation of adequate resources to its expansion has potential to make it a force for real change in the lives of illiterate people.

### Implementation of Nonformal Education

The conceptual framework developed in the study should be subjected to research and testing in order to ensure that it is relevant and responsive to people's educational needs. The implementation component, which involves application of the concept in real situations, requires various elements such as policy decisions, structures, resources and personnel. Moreover, for effective implementation to occur, it becomes necessary to involve incumbents, to assess needs and problems, to develop programs, to seek support of other organizations, to carry out programs, to reflect on how programs have helped and to revise the focus for future action. The approach to implementing nonformal education programs should be based on the assumption that it may be necessary to redirect the focus or to take steps to expand the operation on the basis of experience.

### Further Research on Nonformal Education

In order to increase the relevance of nonformal education, further research efforts are essential. Research outcomes are likely to provide ideas and insights that have potential to make nonformal education more effective and responsive. The conceptual framework proposed in the study should be subjected to action research at the field level in order to identify possibilities for improvement. The research will have to be focused on policy decisions, identification of program areas, development of programs including aspects such as materials, training, resources, structures, participation, and evaluation, implementation strategies and coordination.

## Reflections on the Research Project

Completion of this report prompts some reflections on the research project in general and on the research in particular. The reflections relate to two main questions: What has been learned about nonformal education as a result of doing the research? What has been learned about doing research of this nature that might be helpful to other researchers contemplating a similar project?

Development will probably not take place without the power of people; generation of people's power is, in large measure, a function of learning. Nonformal education is an approach to learning that has potential to address the reality of living of impoverished people. There are different perspectives on nonformal education. Adoption and implementation of selected perspectives are determined by political processes. Like any other state apparatus, nonformal education appears to have been used frequently in accordance with the political agendas of the power holders. In many contexts, the national leadership plays a key role in determining the form of nonformal education. Sometimes the leaders may seem committed to improving people's lives by offering a strong form of nonformal education, but eventually the focus tends to become blurred. Nongovernmental organizations also appear to recognize the value of nonformal education as a force for change but a dramatic change in reality is seldom achieved. The major problem may reside in the ideological bias of the program sponsors. A reality-oriented approach to making nonformal education a pragmatic force seems elusive.

Nonformal education has enormous potential for achieving qualitative improvements in people's lives. It has the potential to make people critically aware, economically productive, socially dynamic and culturally strong. The important factor is associated with knowing the potential and with attempting to achieve what is possible. For this purpose, there is a need to design learning programs that incorporate the potential of nonformal education. But in reality, this strategy seems to promise more in theory than is realized in practice. All too frequently people's expectation to develop their intellectual and physical capacities are unmet. The lessons from this reality suggests the importance of a pragmatic approach to integrating various perspectives on nonformal education and designing an implementation strategy appropriate for the specific context.

Various authors in the field of nonformal adult education are engaged in the production of knowledge through studying reality, critiquing each other's ideas and developing their own concepts. A thorough study and analysis of emerging knowledge of the subject matter may help to advance conceptualizations and to lead to new and relevant knowledge. In addition, case studies of programs implemented in contexts that are similar to those on which researchers may have focused, may be useful in drawing lessons from experience. If possible, it may be worthwhile to assess the cases by examining the actual experience. Another important point may be to solicit the views of potential participants regarding what strategy of nonformal adult education might be practically significant in addressing basic development needs. The most important consideration is that promising ideas derived from various sources should be used to develop a composite concept which has increased potential to alleviate the circumstances of poor illiterate people.

New knowledge produced through academic research may require enrichment through practice. In order to assess the extent to which the knowledge is valid for the intended purpose, it is necessary to test the knowledge against the reality. Insights generated through experience in the reality of the field will increase the strength of the knowledge.

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# APPENDIXES

## Appendix A: Types of Respondents

### Policy Level

Number of Respondents: 9

Members of National Planning Commission

Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture

Additional Secretaries of the same Ministry

Professors of the Institute of Education

Member Secretary of the National Education Committee

Executives of Nongovernmental Organizations

### Program Level

Number of Respondents: 7

Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture

Nonformal Education Supervisors

Trainers

Curriculum Specialist

Nongovernment Organization Program Personnel

### Implementation Level

Number of Interviewees: 20

Participants

Facilitators

# Appendix B: Questionnaire /Interview Guide for Policy Level Personnel

Name: Position:

Responsibilities:

(Please use extra sheets if necessary)

1. What do you consider to be the main rural developments needs in Nepal?

2. What are the major obstacles to meeting these needs? What problems have to be addressed in order to satisfy the needs of people in rural areas?

3. What policies or programs specific to nonformal adult education have been developed by government to address rural development needs?

4. Who are the main decision makers for these programs or policies?

5. Why were these particular policies or programs selected? Were other policies or programs considered? If so, why were they not adopted?

6. What challenges confront government in implementing the selected policies and programs?

7. How effective are the policies and programs in meeting rural development needs?

8. What type of policies do you think might be desirable or more effective? Please indicate why they might be more effective.

9. In general, what would be the main elements of an effective nonformal education strategy?

10. What are the long-term prospects for improvement in quality of rural life through nonformal education?

## Appendix C: Questionnaire /Interview Guide for Program Level Personnel

Name: Position:

Responsibilities:

(Please use extra sheets if necessary)

1. What types of nonformal education programs are being implemented? Why were these particular programs selected?

2. Who are the major actors in deciding on the types of nonformal education programs to be implemented?

3. What strategies are followed in implementing the programs in which you have been involved?

4. What types of learning materials have been developed and used? How effective or appropriate are these materials?

5. How do participants react to the programs within your jurisdiction? In what ways are the daily lives of the participants influenced by the programs?

6. In what ways are the nonformal education programs evaluated? In general, what have been the results of these evaluations?

7. What are the major strengths of the programs which you implement?

8. What do you consider to be the main shortcomings?

9. In what ways have the nonformal adult education programs helped to improve the quality of life of participants?

10. How might the nonformal education programs be made even more effective?

## Appendix D: Interview Schedule for Participants

Name:
Age:
Sex:
Occupation:
Address:

1. For how long have you been involved in this program? Were you involved in other programs previously? If so, tell me about those programs.
2. Why did you decide to participate in this program? What did you expect to learn?
3. What are the more interesting and useful aspects of this program?
4. In what ways has the program helped you? What do you like about the program?
5. What are the shortcomings of the program?
6. How might the program be improved?
7. What types of programs do you think would help to improve the quality of life in rural areas?

## Appendix E: Interview Schedule for Facilitators

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Qualification: |
| Sex: | Occupation: |
| Address: | |

1. Why did you decide to become involved as a facilitator in a nonformal education program?
2. What do you do actually as a facilitator?
3. What activities are conducted in the program in which you are currently involved as a facilitator?
4. How do participants react to the program? Do they seem to find the program helpful? If so, in what ways?
5. In what ways do you think the program helps participants?
6. In general, what are the strengths of the program? What do you consider to be the most effective activities?
7. What are the shortcomings of the program in which you are involved?
8. In your view, what improvements could be made in programs?

# Appendix F: Glossary

ADB = Asian Development Bank

BRAC = Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

CCM = Cha Ma Chi Mapinduji

CERID = Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development

CIDA = Canadian International Development Agency

LCRC = Language Culture Research Centre

MOEC = Ministry of Education and Culture

NCCE = Nepal Centre for Continuing Education

NEW ERA = New Education Research Associates

RIDA = Research Inputs Development Agency

TANU = Tanganyka African National Union

UNDP = United Nations Development Program

UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA = United Nations Funds for Population Activities

USAID = United States Agency for International Development

# RESUME OF SHREERAM LAMICHHANE

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Lamichhane, Shreeram Prasad |
| Present Status: | Deputy Research Officer |
| Employer: | Tribhuvan University<br>Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID)<br>Tripureswor, P.O.Box 2161<br>Kathmandu, Nepal |
| Home Address: | Ward No. 3, Bansbari, Kathmandu Municipality, Nepal |
| Date of Birth: | January 7, 1950 |
| Place of Birth: | Kathmandu |

## Academic Qualification

| Level | Year | Institution |
|---|---|---|
| M.A. (Economics) | 1973 | Tribhuvan University |
| Doctor of Philosophy in Education. | 1992 | University of Alberta, Canada |

## Area of Specialization

Nonformal Adult Education and Rural Development

## Training

a. Received 3 months' training on nonformal education (March-May 1980) in Australia under the Kellogg Fellowship program.

b. Visited Bangladesh and Thailand for a period of one month on an internship program in 1978.

c. Received advanced level training on educational planning and administration in IIEP UNESCO (October 1985-May, 1986), with the choice of, among others, the following units
- School mapping and micro-planning at primary level
- Improvement of quality at the primary level
- Supervision mechanism
- Problems related with universalization of primary education

d. Involved in studying about the primary education system in Algeria, Finland and France during the study tour in those countries under the same training program.

## Job Experience

| Position | Office | Year |
|---|---|---|
| a. Project Coordinator in PACT-sponsored project "Nonformal Education and Rural Income Generation for Chepang Youths and Women." | Research Centre for Educational Innovation Development | 1985-1987 |
| b. Research Associate in World Education-sponsored project "Determinants of Educational Participation in Rural Nepal" | do | 1982-1984 |
| c. Project Coordinator in World Education-sponsored project "Integrated Nonformal Education" (Program planning, designing and implementation of Nonformal education program with focus on rural development in Nepal). | Adult Education Section, Ministry of Education and Culture | 1980-1981 |
| d. Assistant Research Specialist (Making research & evaluation design for the same project) | Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development. | 1977-1979 |
| e. Assistant Research Officer (Worked in planning, designing & implementing project activities in "Education for Rural Development Project") | do | 1976 |
| f. Project Investigator (Assessing needs and carrying out activities in Education for Rural Development Project) | National Education Committee | 1973-1975 |

## Participation in Seminars/Workshops

a. Participated in UNESCO-sponsored seminar on "Development of Education in Rural Areas" in 1987.

b. Participated in a seminar on management of nonformal education-sponsored by Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, Singapore (1986).

c. Visited West Germany, U.K. and Denmark in connection with study tour in the area of nonformal education organized by German Adult Education Association (1984).

d. Visited as nonformal education and rural development expert to the universities of Kerala and Madras and mounted seminars for post graduate students (1984).

e. Participated in a nonformal education seminar in Sri Lanka (1983).

f. Participated as team leader from Nepal in one weeks' seminar on Adult Education held in Tehran in 1978.

g. Participated in UNESCO-sponsored advanced level 2 weeks' workshop on Education for Rural Transformation in New Delhi in 1977.

h. Participated in and also coordinated the operation of several CERID-sponsored national level seminars.

## Publications

Worked as

a. Co- Director of the project "Education and Rural Income Generation for Chepang Youths and Women".

b. A member of the editorial board for CERID's annual journal 'Education for Development (Nepali).

c. Coordinator,"Development of Post-Literacy Learning Materials" A research report.

d. Research Associate, "Determinants of Educational Participation" in Rural Nepal: A study report.

e. Co-Editor, "Effectiveness of Primary Education": An evaluative study (Nepali).

e. Co-Editor, "Model School": A workshop report (in Nepali).

f. Co-Translator ( ASPBAE publication "Adult Education and Development" in Nepali)

Written

a. "Nonformal Education and Rural Income Generation" published in "Education and Development" CERID educational journal in English, 1988.

b. "Development of Education in Rural Areas" published in "Education and Development" CERID educational journal in English, 1987.

c. "Nonformal Education for Development" published in "Education for Development" CERID educational journal in Nepali, 1980.

d. "Some Attempts at Educational Innovation" published in 'Education for Development', CERID educational journal in Nepali, 1979.

e. "Nonformal Education in Nepal: Some Experiences of the Past and Present" published in 'Education for Development', CERID educational journal in Nepali 1977.

f. "Education for Rural Development: An Experimental Project" published in 'Education for Development', CERID educational journal in Nepal, 1976.

g. In Co-Authorship, "Education for Rural Development" A handbook (in Nepali) 1979.

h. In Co-Authorship, "Education for Rural Transformation" A seminar report (1980).

i. In Co-Authorship, "Determinants of Educational Participation in Rural Nepal" published in 'Comparative Education Review' Vol. 30, No.4, (1986).

j. In Co-Editorship, 'Primary Education in Nepal: An Evaluative Study" CERID 1984.

## Other Involvements

A member of Asia-South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, Region I, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

General Secretary of Nepal Centre for Continuing Education.

Resource person for a number of projects conducted for rural development in Nepal.